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THE
SUPREMACY QUESTION

CONSIDERED

IN ITS SUCCESSIVE PHASES,
THEOCRATIC, IMPERIAL OR ROYAL, PAPAL,
AND POPULAR.

AN ESSAY

CALLED FORTH

BY THE JUDGMENT OF THE JUDICIAL COMMITTEE
IN THE CASE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN CHURCH.

BY

THE REV. GEORGE EDWARD BIBER, LL.D.

INCUMBENT OF ROEHAMPTON.

[*Reprinted from the* COLONIAL CHURCH CHRONICLE.]



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PREFACE.

ON the delivery of the "Judgment" of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council on the petition presented by Dr. Colenso against the Metropolitan of Capetown, the author of the following pages was invited to contribute an article on the subject to the pages of the *Colonial Church Chronicle*. Having, from the commencement of the controversy called forth by Dr. Colenso's writings, and during the course of the proceedings to which it gave rise, taken a deep interest, and occasionally an active part, in the discussion of the questions involved, the author had arrived at the conclusion that it was impossible to compress within the limits of an article the many and grave considerations which the case presented. He was deeply impressed with the necessity of having recourse to first principles on the Supremacy Question, in order to obtain a correct view of the position in which the Church has been placed; to calm the fears and to dissipate the doubts of those who considered the Catholicity of the English Church imperilled by the "Judgment," taken in connexion with other decisions that had preceded it; and to ascertain the direction in which the Church must look for present redress and future security. Accordingly he proposed to follow up the article he had been asked to furnish by a series of papers in the *Colonial Church Chronicle*, to be republished afterwards in a consecutive form. If the facts elicited in the course of this inquiry, and the inferences drawn from them, shall in any measure tend to reassure the minds of Churchmen, and to make them turn their attention to the things that are wanting in order to enable the Episcopate effectually to discharge its high function in the government of the Church, as the divinely appointed representation of Christ's Supremacy, the labour of the writer in the composition and republication of these pages will have met with an ample reward.

G. E. B.

Roehampton, All Saints' Day, 1865.

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ERRATUM.

The Reader is requested to correct the following erratum, which materially affects the argument. Page 12, line 22, for "deprive," read "depose." The reading of the original document is "*depose.*"

I. EXAMINATION OF THE "JUDGMENT."

THE extraordinary document put forth under the title, "Judgment of the Lords of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council upon the petition of the Bishop of Natal," decides nothing. By it the Metropolitan of Capetown and his heretical Suffragan are left "as they were." It is a heap of negations, set forth in a mass of legal verbiage. There is an appellant—but he is a nonentity. There is a respondent—but he is a nonentity likewise. There is a judgment appealed from—but that too is a nonentity. The Court which pronounced that judgment is a nonentity; and so is the law under which the Court proceeded. There is not a single item in the case, be it *persona* or *res*, *jus* or *lex*, that has any real existence. The whole affair is reduced to a mere phantasmagoria of unsubstantial shadows. A Bishop who has no Diocese is arraigned before a Metropolitan who has no Province; the lack-province Metropolitan convenes a Court which has no jurisdiction, proceeds according to a law which has no force, and pronounces a sentence which has no validity. And from this sentence, by way of climax, the Judicial Committee hears an appeal which is *in vacuo* and pronounces a sentence which carries no weight and has no effect.

The so-called judgment of the Court of Appeal cannot be said to reverse the sentence pronounced by the Bishop of Capetown; all it amounts to is a declaration that the sentence in question is not a sentence of which the Judicial Committee can take cognisance by way of appeal. To lay a foundation for an appeal, there must be a sentence from a Court recognised by the tribunal exercising appellate jurisdiction; and the justice of the sentence appealed against must be impugned either on the merits, or on technical points of procedure. By denying the existence of any such Court as that which pronounced the sentence complained of, the Lords of the Judicial Committee, in fact, cut from under them the ground for the exercise of their appellate jurisdiction, and, consistently with this, they gave their decision without entertaining the appeal brought before them, either on the merits or on technical grounds. This being the case, we humbly conceive that it would have been a simpler, and, we venture to think, a more dignified course, if their Lordships had dismissed the petition on

the ground that it related to a matter altogether beyond the scope of their judicial action.

There were two reasons, however, against the adoption of that course. In the first place it might not seem expedient for their Lordships to declare, in direct terms, their incompetency to deal with the question. To ignore altogether the existence of the Court which had pronounced the sentence complained of, and to treat the sentence itself as a nullity, though in effect equivalent to a declaration of their own incompetency to hear an appeal against it, would save appearances, giving to the decision of the appellate tribunal the form of an adjudication. In the next place, it cannot be denied that there were features introduced into the case, through the injudicious legal advice relied on by the Metropolitan of Capetown, which afforded to the Lords of the Judicial Committee the opportunity of masking their substantial incompetency to deal with it by a colourable exercise of appellate jurisdiction. But whatever might be the considerations which induced their Lordships to adopt, as the more expedient of the two, the course they did, instead of the simpler one they might have taken, it is, in the interest of the Church of South Africa (and not in her interest alone, but in that of the Church in other colonies of the British Empire—nay, indirectly even in that of the mother Church at home),—all-important that the legal cobwebs which have been spun around the metropolitan jurisdiction of the Bishop of Capetown should be swept away, so that the character of perfect validity inherent in that jurisdiction, and the real position in which it stands, may be clearly discerned. If, in the endeavour to do this, we should be compelled to brush somewhat unceremoniously against particular passages in the "Judgment," we wish it to be clearly understood that it is not thereby intended to offer any disrespect to the tribunal whose award it has become necessary to criticise and to dissect, much less to call in question the royal supremacy on which its appellate jurisdiction is based.

With the most sincere desire to give to that supremacy all the honour due to it, and with the most profound respect for the high dignity and consummate legal ability of the learned lords composing the Court of Appeal, we may be permitted to think that the practical result of the consideration which they have given to the case might have been embodied in a form more conducive to a clear understanding of the position occupied by the South African Church, and less invidious towards the Bishop of Capetown. It might, possibly, have been more graceful, perhaps more consonant with strict truth and justice, for their lordships to have cast their conclusions in some such mould

as this :—"The case brought under our notice by this petition involves two questions of vital importance, not only to the parties immediately concerned, but to a vast number of Her Majesty's lieges in every part of her dominions—viz., the doctrine of the Church, and her internal discipline. As regards the former, this Court has cognisance of it only through the formularies to which certain Acts of Parliament have given a legal sanction ; and, as regards the latter, it falls under our supervision only by virtue of certain statutes enacted for the government of the Established Church of this realm. In the territory in which this case has arisen, those Acts of Parliament, defining the doctrine, and those statutes, regulating the discipline, of the Established Church, have no force or validity—in fact, no existence, for the simple reason that there is in that territory no Established Church. The matter, therefore, is one which lies entirely beyond our interference or control. It is much to be regretted, that by an oversight of its law officers, the Crown should have been led to issue Letters Patent purporting to create an ecclesiastical jurisdiction in a territory in which the Crown had, by the previous concession of an independent Legislature to the colonists, renounced the power of doing anything of the sort. We are, therefore, bound to pronounce for the validity of the protest under which the Bishop of Capetown has entered an appearance before this Court, while at the same time we must declare that so far as the powers ostensibly conferred on him by his Letters Patent have been relied on by him, he has fallen into an error, the responsibility of which does not rest with him, but with the law officers of the Crown. What, apart from the Letters Patent, and the laws affecting the doctrine and discipline of the Established Church of this realm, may be the relative rights and responsibilities of persons laying claim to the offices of Bishop and Metropolitan respectively, and what the merits of the question in dispute between the persons claiming to be Metropolitan of Capetown and Bishop of Natal, it is not our province to determine ; nor have we, as a Court constituted under certain definite statutes, which do not apply to the territory where the case has arisen, any means of arriving at such a determination. Accordingly, the petition of the Bishop of Natal, asking us to do that which we have not the power of doing, must be dismissed."

That this is, virtually, the effect of the conclusion arrived at by the Judicial Committee, although carefully so worded as to convey the impression of a formal judgment adverse to the Bishop of Capetown having been pronounced, clearly appears on examining the prayer of Dr. Colenso's petition. In that petition he prayed, that he may be declared entitled to

the tenure of the See of Natal ; that the sentence of the Bishop of Capetown may be declared null and void, and of no effect ; that the case may be heard on appeal before the Judicial Committee ; and that the Bishop of Capetown may be inhibited from obstructing Dr. Colenso in the exercise of his episcopal functions. With none of these prayers does the "Judgment" comply.

So far from affirming that Dr. Colenso is still "entitled to hold the office and See of Natal for the term of his natural life, under the Letters Patent granted to him, unless and until the same shall be recalled and vacated by due process of law, for some sufficient cause of forfeiture in the law,"—which is the first prayer of the petition,—the "Judgment" declares the Letters Patent issued by the Crown for the constitution of Episcopal Sees in South Africa to be *ab initio* null and void. Dr. Colenso is thus left in the position of one who has to go in quest of a title to the "office and See" which he claims ; a position which in his case is absurd, and almost ludicrous ; seeing that he has pleaded his title under his Letters Patent, in opposition to the only source from which it is possible for any one to derive Episcopal authority in South Africa, viz. the power of self-perpetuation inherent in the Catholic Episcopate from the beginning, and exercised in Dr. Colenso's case in his consecration by the Archbishop of Canterbury and his assistant consecrators.

The prayer for a hearing of his petition by way of appeal is altogether ignored by the "Judgment," which does not in any way touch upon the merits of the case itself ; no question being raised as to the soundness or otherwise of Dr. Colenso's doctrine, or even as to the fairness and propriety of the mode of procedure resorted to by the Bishop of Capetown. Every inquiry of this nature, having for its object the revision, and, if justice so require, the reversal, of the sentence of the Bishop of Capetown, is superseded, and, in fact, pronounced legally impossible, by the declaration that the Bishop of Capetown has no legal jurisdiction ; and that for this reason, because he is not, in a legal sense, a Judge ; because he has no legal power to constitute a Court ; because the only law under which the Court of Appeal can take cognisance of a case of this kind has no existence in South Africa. For the same reason, that in law there is nothing to appeal from, the Court of Appeal has necessarily refrained from the preliminary stage of "staying and suspending" the sentence of the Bishop of Capetown, and of "inhibiting and enjoining him from offering to Dr. Colenso any let or impediment in the exercise of his office or the possession of his See and its emoluments." The proceedings of the Bishop of Capetown being declared "null and void in law," there is no room left for the

process of suspension or inhibition ; seeing that to suspend or to inhibit the sentence would be virtually to recognise it, which is precisely what the Judicial Committee has refused to do.

The only point on which Dr. Colenso's petition has found favour with their Lordships, is the prayer that they would declare the jurisdiction assumed by the Bishop of Capetown, under the Letters Patent, as well as the appellate jurisdiction conferred by them upon the Archbishop of Canterbury, and "the pretended trial, proceedings, and sentence, null and void, and of no effect." But, even on this point, the "Judgment" is a pitfall for Dr. Colenso, rather than a decision in his favour, as at first sight it appears to be. Their Lordships have not ventured to affirm, as prayed for, that the sentence of the Bishop of Capetown is "*of no effect.*" To have done so would have involved them in a palpable contradiction with patent and notorious facts ; seeing that the sentence has already had the effect of causing the clergy and laity of Natal to repudiate the Episcopal rule of Dr. Colenso, of shutting against him the doors of their churches, and rendering his exercise of Episcopal functions in what he still persists in calling his Diocese *de facto* impossible. But not only have their Lordships wisely abstained from committing themselves to a declaration in open contradiction with existing facts ; even that part of their decision which is in seeming accordance with the prayer of the petition, viz. that the proceedings and sentence of the Bishop of Capetown might be declared "null and void," is materially modified, and its sting taken away, by the addition of the qualifying words "*in law.*" As supreme expositors of the law, and nothing else, their Lordships limited their inquiry to the question what "*in law,*" i.e. according to the law existing and in force in South Africa, was the value of the proceedings and sentence of the Bishop of Capetown. They found that there was no law at all applicable to the case, and, as a logical consequence, that "*in law*" the proceedings and sentence were "null and void." Beyond this declaration the "Judgment" has not gone ; and the proceedings and sentence, so far as they are not of a legal, but of a spiritual character, are, therefore, untouched by it. While thus the "Judgment" does not help Dr. Colenso in the particular in which he most stands in need of help—the maintenance and confirmation of his spiritual office—it throws the greatest "let and impediment" in the way of any attempt on his part to exercise it ; inasmuch as the arguments by which the Lords of the Judicial Committee have arrived at the conclusion that any exercise of jurisdiction by the Bishop of Capetown is "null and void *in law,*" apply with equal force to any supposed *legal* right of Dr. Colenso to exercise the Episcopal office in the Diocese of Natal.

The position in which he is left by the "Judgment" is indeed a cruel one,—supremely ridiculous, if it were not so exceedingly pitiable. *Legally*, the Judgment of the Judicial Committee of Privy Council, invoked by himself, strips him of all the rights and powers which he claimed under the Letters Patent; and *spiritually* the sentence of the Bishop of Capetown has denuded him of all the rights and powers conferred upon him by his consecration. By the effect of the latter sentence, he has ceased to be in a *spiritual* sense a Bishop,—except in name by reason of the indelibility of Holy Orders; and the "Judgment" of the Judicial Committee has unbishopped him in a *legal* sense.

While the "Judgment" of the Judicial Committee has thus effectually annulled and extinguished the South African Episcopate in its *legal* aspect, showing it to be devoid of all *legal* status, character, or power, it has done something more—something which, we apprehend, there was no intention of doing in their Lordships' minds, but which, however undesignedly, has nevertheless been effectually and conclusively done by their decision. They have annulled not only the whole legal position of the South African Episcopate, but their own jurisdiction in those provinces as a Court of Supreme Ecclesiastical Appeal. Since the jurisdiction of the Bishop is a *legal* nullity in that part, and in other parts similarly situated, of Her Majesty's dominions, it follows, as a matter of inevitable, legal as well as logical, consequence, that an appellate jurisdiction from the jurisdiction of the Bishop must be a *legal* nullity likewise, a nullity based upon a nullity, or what may be termed a potential nullity. That their Lordships had no suspicion of this effect flowing from their decision, or rather from the facts upon which their decision is based, is more than, bearing in mind the legal acumen of the eminent persons composing the Court, it would be either becoming or safe to affirm. On the contrary, there appear to be unmistakeable traces of a laboured effort on the part of their Lordships to escape from that obvious conclusion.

The Judicial Committee could not, of course, struggle against the fact that the Letters Patent of both the Bishops of Capetown and Natal were not only "not granted in pursuance of any Orders made by Her Majesty in Council, or by virtue of any statute of the Imperial Parliament," but that they were "not confirmed by any Act of the Legislature of the Cape of Good Hope, or of the Legislative Council of Natal," without which, after the previous concession of independent Local Legislatures to both the district of Natal and the Cape of Good Hope, the Letters Patent so issued by the Crown could not be valid and good in law. It was impossible, therefore, for their Lordships to

recognise or to sustain any of the territorial arrangements constituting the Dioceses, or any of the powers which it was the professed intention of the Letters Patent to confer upon their Bishops. At the date of the issue of the Letters Patent, there was no longer any power in the Crown to "create Ecclesiastical Corporations whose status, right, and authority the colony could be required to recognise." The Anglican Church there, with her office-bearers, occupies, according to the definition laid down by the Judicial Committee in a former, and again in the present case, simply the position of "a voluntary association."

This being the case, it would seem to follow that the Church, when placed in this position, is free to regulate her own internal affairs, without any interference on the part of the Crown. The theory of the Royal Supremacy which rests on the foundation of the Union between Church and State is, in the nature of things, wholly inapplicable to a voluntary religious association. This undeniable deduction from their own definition of the Church's position in South Africa their Lordships were, not unnaturally perhaps, unwilling to accept. With a view to escape from it, the Judicial Committee of Privy Council fell back upon the assertion of the supreme authority of "the Sovereign as Head of the Established Church, and Depositary of the ultimate appellate jurisdiction." To say nothing of the title "Head of the Church," which has been formally renounced on behalf of the Crown, and which is thus *obiter*, and most strangely revived,—how can the authority belonging to the Sovereign over "the Established Church" be brought to bear upon a Church which is not established, which, as their Lordships themselves affirm, is simply "a voluntary association?" To cure this evident *non-sequitur*, the Judgment relies upon the general power given to the Sovereign, in the vaguest possible terms, by the Act 3 and 4 William IV. c. 41, to refer to the Judicial Committee for hearing or consideration, and for report thereon, "*any such other matters whatsoever as the Sovereign shall think fit.*"

The interpretation given for the nonce to this clause by the Lords of the Judicial Committee raises a most grave question,—one which it is not a little startling to find raised in this age of civil and religious liberty. According to the construction put upon it in this instance, the will of the Sovereign—in other words, the determination of the Minister of the day—overrides all the recognised principles and rules of law, and suspends all the constitutional rights of the subject. Any question, no matter what may, in the ordinary course of law, be its aspect or its merits, may be referred as an exceptional case to the adjudication of a tribunal which, while claiming to wield unlimited discretionary powers, labours under this radical vice in its constitution,

that its members are selected for the occasion by the sole will and decree of the very man who sets its tremendous powers in motion. A tribunal specially packed for the trial of the particular case in hand, bound by no precise rules of law, and not circumscribed by any well-defined constitutional limits, is capable of being made an engine of tyranny, before which the Star Chamber may well hide its diminished head. The most extravagant assertion of high prerogative claims under the reign of the Tudors has never gone beyond this. It involves a total annihilation of all freedom, civil and religious.

The bare promulgation of such a doctrine from the Council Chamber in Whitehall would, in itself, be sufficiently alarming. But it is rendered far more so by the purpose for which in the present instance it is promulgated. The object is to prop up the monstrous proposition that when the Crown has ceased to give to the Church assistance or protection of any kind, nay, when it has actually denuded itself of the power of doing so, and has reduced the Church to the condition of a mere voluntary religious society, the Crown shall, nevertheless, retain a power to interfere with the Church, and to prevent her from governing herself in accordance with her own laws,—laws of greater antiquity than the monarchy, and of higher authority than even the supremacy of the Crown. In the case of any other religious association of a purely voluntary character, the assertion of such a claim would not be for an instant tolerated. The cry of civil and religious liberty would be raised against it in utterance both loud and deep. Why, then, should the Church in South Africa have a different and exceptional measure meted out to her? Is the circumstance, that in her doctrine and in the principles of her discipline she is *voluntarily* in loyal accord with the Established Church of the realm, to subject her to a power of interference with her free action and with the rights of conscience of her members, to which it would be deemed intolerable tyranny to subject the meanest and the most disloyal of sects?

The key to this exceptional treatment of those who, though deprived of their *legal* status as a Church, turned adrift upon the sea of voluntarism, nevertheless adhere faithfully to the traditions of the mother Church to the utmost extent to which their altered circumstances will admit of it, is to be found in the view which their Lordships take of the Episcopal office. But for the remarkable narrowness of mind apt to be engendered by a professional bias, it would be difficult to believe that the members of the Judicial Committee should be as ignorant as they appear to be of the origin and nature of that office which, coeval with Christianity, derives its authority from the Divine Head and Founder of the Church. From the wording of the

"Judgment" it would appear that the only notion which its framers have of a Bishop is that he is "a creature of the law," whose authority, whose character, nay, his very being, is derived from the Royal Supremacy, the *fons et origo* of all that is known of the Church to the legal mind. This raises the whole question about the nature and origin of that Royal Supremacy which, according to the doctrine of the Judicial Committee, has superseded the supremacy of Christ Himself over His Church. To institute this inquiry, so forced upon the Church, is the object of the following pages. Meanwhile it may suffice to have indicated the narrow, thoroughly lawyer-like, and as thoroughly untheological, view of the Episcopal office that underlies the palpable inconsistency into which the Judicial Committee have been betrayed, of placing the Church of South Africa under all the disadvantages incident to the position of a voluntary religious association, and yet at the same time denying her the countervailing advantage of absolute freedom of self-legislation and self-government, independently of all interference or control on the part of the temporal power.

It is no more than justice to the Judicial Committee to add, that although a more discriminating view of the question brought before it might reasonably have been expected at the hands of these eminent luminaries of the law, every temptation, we may say every provocation, to treat the case in the manner they have done has been put in their way by the Metropolitan of Capetown, through the unfortunate introduction of the question of jurisdiction alleged to be created by his Letters Patent, and of an alleged contract between himself and his suffragan, into the proceedings taken against Dr. Colenso. There can be no delicacy, now, in stating that the unfortunate result was distinctly not only foreseen but foretold, and might have been avoided but for the greater weight not unnaturally attached to official advice over suggestions and warnings proceeding from an unofficial, and, as it might be thought, officious source. We have lying before us a document which,—starting from the decision pronounced by the Judicial Committee on the previous case "*Long v. the Bishop of Capetown*," whereby the Church of South Africa had been declared to be in a position "no better and no worse" than any other voluntary religious association,—strongly urged the propriety of basing the whole proceedings against Dr. Colenso on the ancient Canon Law of the Church Catholic.

"By this decision," the document in question observes, "the Church of England in the colony of Capetown is placed in the position of a voluntary religious association, originating in a Mission planted in South Africa by the Church of England, with the sanction and concurrence of

the Crown, as far as the internal organization of the Mission is concerned, but having no legal *status* in the colony, nor, by consequence, any coercive external jurisdiction.

"It is supposed that, under these circumstances, the authority of the Metropolitan and the Bishops of the said Mission is of a purely spiritual nature, derived from the spiritual authority of the Mother Church as a branch of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, as vested in her Archbishops and Bishops, and specially in the Archbishop of Canterbury; and that the effect of the Royal Letters Patent extends no further than that by them the Queen, as having the chief government of the Church of England, sanctioned, concurred in, and regulated, the exercise of the spiritual authority inherent in the Archbishop of Canterbury, in sending forth a Mission, with a Metropolitan and Suffragan Bishops subject to him at its head, into that part of Her Majesty's dominions.

"The British Crown having no power to plant the Church in the Cape Colony in the character of an establishment, with the law and jurisdiction peculiar to that character, it is further supposed that the Mission planted in South Africa by the Anglican Branch of the Church Catholic, reverts, *ipso facto*, to the simple character of a branch of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church; and that in that character her internal government, being of a purely spiritual nature, must be carried on in conformity with the laws or canons recognised by the Church Universal from the earliest times, the Metropolitan and Bishops exercising, for the purposes of such government, the spiritual powers vested in their respective offices by the ancient Canons."

The document then proceeds to show that those powers included, among others, the following, which bear in an especial manner upon the case in hand, viz.—

"1. The power to convene Church Synods, both provincial and diocesan, for the purposes for which Church Synods were originally instituted; such purposes being—first, legislative; second, administrative; third, judicial.

"2. The power of the Metropolitan to exercise spiritual jurisdiction over his Suffragan Bishops."

The document then, ranging over the first nine centuries of the Christian era, from the Apostolical canons down to those of the Fourth Council of Constantinople, proceeds to enumerate the canons relating to these powers, pointing out the several provisions contained in them, both for the convening of synods and for the exercise of spiritual jurisdiction by Metropolitans over their Suffragans. From these Canons it appears that a Bishop is liable to be tried for heresy by the Metropolitan and the Bishops of the province, who, if after due admonition and opportunity of retractation he persist in his heresy, have the power of inflicting such punishment as to them may seem commensurate with the offence. In view of the difficulties likely to arise

from the fact already affirmed by the decision of the Judicial Committee in the case "*Long v. the Bishop of Capetown*," that in granting Letters Patent the Crown had exceeded its powers, and that the Ecclesiastical Law of England has no force in the South African colonies, as well as of the doubtful character of the novel, though ingenious, proposal to make a personal contract between Dr. Gray and Dr. Colenso, implied in their acceptance of their respective offices under the Royal Letters Patent, the basis of the proceedings, the document observes:—

"A doubt has arisen whether it would be safe for the Metropolitan of Capetown and his Suffragans to proceed upon the basis so suggested, or, at all events, upon that basis alone; because, if, in regard to any point the jurisdiction deduced from the implied contract should not be sustainable on technical grounds, the sentence might, on appeal, be quashed as invalid—a danger which it is, on more than one account, all-important should be guarded against.

"The grounds on which such failure might occur seem to be chiefly two—1. On the Metropolitan of Capetown will lie the *onus probandi* that the implied contract between himself and the Bishop of Natal includes authority to try him according to the Ecclesiastical Law of the Church of England. 2. Supposing the effect of the contract to be sufficient to make the Bishop of Natal amenable to the English Ecclesiastical Law, the further question will arise, whether the authorities of the Cape Colony will suffer the English Ecclesiastical Law to be so applied in the Cape Colony, in which that law has no existence;—whether the attempt so to apply it may not arouse the jealousy of the Colony, and so provoke, either an interdict from the Supreme Court to prevent the further prosecution of the proceedings instituted under that law, or else the reversal of the sentence when pronounced, on the ground of incompetency.

"In view of this danger, it would appear advisable for the Metropolitan and his Suffragans to ground their proceedings *ab initio* upon a twofold and alternative basis.

"Supposing them to arrive at the conclusion to which the Opinion previously given on the extracts from "*The Book of the Pentateuch*" points—viz. the removal of Dr. Colenso (after due investigation, admonition, and opportunity of retraction) from his office—the sentence might be so framed as to embrace, along with the basis of the implied contract and consequent application of the English Ecclesiastical Law to the case, the basis of the ancient Canon Law of the Church Catholic, which vests in the Metropolitan and his Suffragans or Comprovincial Bishops a disciplinary power, enabling them to pronounce such sentence as to them in their discretion may seem fit.

"This ancient Canon Law of the Church Catholic (which is included in, and forms the basis of, the Ecclesiastical Law of the English Establishment) is not obnoxious to the same objection on the part of the colony; being in its operation, under such circumstances as those in which the Church is placed in the Cape Colony, of a purely spiritual, as distinct from a legal and externally coercive character; the ancient law, in fact, of the Church, viewed

as a voluntary religious association laying claim to no legal status in the Colony, but only to the right which every such association possesses—a right expressly recognised by the Judgment of the Privy Council in the appeal case '*Long v. the Bishop of Capetown*,'—to exercise its own internal discipline in accordance with its own laws.

"The sentence might recite the doubt which exists as to the applicability of the English Ecclesiastical Law, and reserve the resolution of that doubt to such tribunals, Colonial or Imperial, as might hereafter be appealed to and be competent to decide the question,—and might then go on to declare that, whether under the English Ecclesiastical Law, or according to the ancient Canon Law of the Church Catholic, the Bishop of Natal has rendered himself liable to deposition—the sentence, even on the basis of the English Ecclesiastical Law, stopping short of deprivation (as implying the assumption of an externally coercive power, which the Metropolitan of Capetown and his Suffragans can in no case possess, and should not, therefore, on any account, seem to claim, in the Colony), and going to deposition only;—and that they, the Metropolitan and his Suffragans, whether by virtue of the authority given to them by the contract, under the Royal Letters Patent, and the English Ecclesiastical Law, if this authority should be found to belong to them in the Colony, or else by virtue of the (purely spiritual) authority vested in them *virtute officii* under the ancient Canons of the Church Catholic, deprive him accordingly.

"A sentence so restricted,—as affecting only the spiritual relations of the Bishop of Natal to the Church of which he is a Bishop—and so framed as to depend for its validity, not upon the English Ecclesiastical Law alone, but upon the ancient Canons of the Church Catholic likewise, will be unimpeachable before any temporal tribunal, whether Colonial or Imperial, even in the event of the Colonial Courts repudiating the application of the English Ecclesiastical Law as an invasion of the legislative independence of the Colony. Such a sentence must necessarily be respected by every Court to which Dr. Colenso might appeal against it, as being in accordance with the internal laws and regulations of the Church, viewed as a voluntary religious association, whose laws and regulations are not the less entitled to respect because they are not—as in the case, for example, of the Methodist body—one century, but many centuries old; and are unquestionably binding on the Bishop of Natal, as having sworn *canonical* obedience—that is, obedience under the Canons of the Church—to the Metropolitan of Capetown.

"The only question remaining, if that course were adopted by the Metropolitan and his Suffragans, would be how the Bishop of Natal should be dealt with in the event of his refusing to obey the sentence of the Metropolitan and his Comprovincials, and contumaciously attempting to continue in the exercise of his Episcopal functions, and in the possession of the temporalities of the See of Natal.

"With regard to the spiritual part of the sentence, affecting his capability of exercising Episcopal functions, the course indicated by the ancient Canons (and equally so by the English Ecclesiastical Law) would be excommunication, taking that term, of course, in its purely spiritual sense. With regard to the temporalities of the See, their restitution would have to be sought at the hands of the Colonial temporal Courts, which, upon proof

given of the deposition of the Bishop of Natal in accordance with the disciplinary laws of the Church, could not, in common justice,—and, as its decision in the appeal case of ‘*Long v. the Bishop of Capetown*,’ shows, would not—refuse to dispossess the Bishop, and to give possession to the administrators of the Diocese, who would be the proper parties to institute the suit for the recovery of the temporalities of the See.

“Even in the highly improbable—not to say impossible—event that the Superior Court of the colony should refuse to dispossess Dr. Colenso of the temporalities of his See, and that the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council should on appeal endorse that refusal, the injury to the Church would be of a merely pecuniary nature. Her spiritual character, her power to uphold the Faith against the assaults of a Bishop lapsed into heresy, would be vindicated, and the pernicious consequences of a miscarriage of justice in a case of such immense importance to the Anglican branch of the Church Catholic would be averted, as well as the Diocese of Natal and the South African Church freed from the scandal of heresy seated on an Episcopal throne.”

“Forewarned,” they say, “is to be forearmed.” In the present instance, unhappily, it has not proved so. The reliance placed, in the sentence of the Bishop of Capetown, on the authority conferred upon him by his Letters Patent, and by the implied contract between the Bishop of Natal and himself, has laid him open to the slur cast upon his proceedings and his sentence by the “Judgment” of the Judicial Committee, declaring them “null and void in law.” This result is not the less to be regretted, because it had been actually foreseen and predicted, and the course by which it might have been averted had been distinctly pointed out.

At the same time no great harm is done. As between the Metropolitan of Capetown and his heretical Suffragan, the issue of the contest is a drawn battle. If the Metropolitan of Capetown has no legal status, neither has Dr. Colenso. If the former has no legal claim to exercise Ecclesiastical jurisdiction according to the law of England, the latter has no legal claim to the exercise of the functions and the enjoyment of the emoluments of his office.

As between the Judicial Committee of Privy Council and the Church of South Africa, the case is, if possible, simpler still, and more favourable to the cause of the Church. If indeed it were conceivable that the high prerogative claims asserted in the “Judgment” would be followed up by an attempt to enforce them, by subjecting the non-established Church of South Africa, reduced as she is to the condition of a voluntary association, and deprived of all the legal safeguards which protect the Established Church, to the exceptional and arbitrary control of a tribunal dependent for its composition on the pleasure of the Minister of the day, and for its law on its own discretion, the position would be perilous in the extreme. Of this, how-

ever, there is not the remotest chance. The formidable assertion of undefined and unlimited powers with which the "Judgment" concludes, is evidently no more than a *brutum fulmen* intended to cover the weakness of the position of the Judicial Committee—a grandiloquent substitute for the humiliating confession of its incompetency and inability to deal with questions affecting the internal relations of a non-established Church, which the fact of her unwavering allegiance to the Catholic principles of doctrine and discipline that lie at the foundation of the Mother Church of England cannot deprive of the privileges and immunities solemnly recognised as belonging to every voluntary religious association under the rule of a constitutional Sovereign, and in an age of civil and religious liberty. The Metropolitan of Capetown can exceedingly well afford the snubbing he has received from the tribunal presided over by Lord Westbury, for leaning, under what he was justified in considering "the best legal advice," upon the broken reed of his Letters Patent; considering that, in exchange for this small discourtesy in point of form, he has gained the substantial advantage of an express declaration from the highest Court in the empire, that he and the Church over which by Divine Providence he has been set to rule, are "without law," and must therefore be "a law unto themselves." There are stronger bands to hold the spiritual structure of the Church together, than the red tape of Doctors' Commons and of Whitehall. On these, the ancient Canons of the Church Universal, whose authority is coeval with her existence, the South African Church will have to fall back.

That those now bearing rule over her, with Bishop Gray at their head, are both prepared and well able to organize her institutions in accordance with those time-honoured principles, is sufficiently clear from the "Acts and Constitutions," framed by the Provincial Synod of the 15th of December, 1863. These "Acts and Constitutions" moreover form the best guarantee for the continued connexion and intercommunion of the Church of South Africa with the Mother Church of England, in that great network of Anglo-Catholic Churches which is rapidly covering the earth with vigorous saplings of truly Catholic growth. Who knows, but that at some future day her free daughter in South Africa, strong in the might of her freedom, may even stretch out a helping hand to the Mother Church in England, labouring under the infirmities of age, and weighed down under the pressure of secular tyranny? May the time when the latter shall stand in need of such assistance be far distant; and in the mean time may her South African daughter prosper, "increasing," after the example of her Divine Master, in "wisdom and stature, and in our with God and man."

II. THE SUPREMACY QUESTION.

The course of events in connexion with the Church in South Africa—the lapse into heresy, and consequent deposition, of one of her Bishops, and the abortive attempt on the part of the latter to invoke the aid of the secular arm against the spiritual authority of the Church, whose commission he had borne, and whose trust he had betrayed—has unexpectedly forced on the practical solution of a problem which had long occupied and perplexed the minds of thoughtful Churchmen. Accustomed to view the Church as an institution intimately united with the State, and to concede to the Head of the State the exercise of supreme government and jurisdiction over the Church, men's minds had not unnaturally been disturbed by a succession of proceedings on the part of the Crown, in the exercise of both its administrative and its judicial functions, which indicated but too clearly the predominance of influences hostile to the Church, in the body politic. There was reason to fear that henceforth the most sacred rights of the Church would be invaded, and her very faith imperilled, by an alliance which was shaping itself more and more distinctly into an unscrupulous tyranny on the one side, and an intolerable bondage on the other.

Two causes had concurred in producing insensibly—we might almost say unintentionally on the part of those who set them in motion,—this unsatisfactory result. A succession of changes in the political constitution had greatly altered the position and circumscribed the power of the Head of the State. The constitutional Sovereign of the nineteenth century occupies a very different place in the body politic from that filled by the Tudor Princes in the sixteenth. Under the sway of the latter, the personal conviction and the personal will of the Head of the State was the mainspring on which the whole action of the political machinery depended. Now that machinery has become in a great measure self-acting; the part assigned to the Head of the State being to preside over, rather than to regulate or to control, its action; to represent, irrespectively of all personal bias, the conviction and the will of the nation, as expressed by its representatives.

Simultaneously with this process of gradually effacing the personal conviction and the personal will of the Sovereign from the action of the State, there has been a progressive assertion of the personal conviction

and the personal will of the individuals composing the nation. The idea of making adherence to a particular belief, and a line of conduct conformable to it, obligatory upon the individual by virtue of his citizenship, has been expunged from the political constitution. Every one is free to frame for himself, and to hold, whatever belief he pleases ; to modify and change that belief as often as he sees fit ; and, while under an obligation to obey what for the time being is law, he has full liberty to use every effort to procure alterations of the law in accordance with his opinions. In the conflict thence ensuing between a host of discordant and often antagonistic opinions, and consequent endeavours to give effect to them, the final decision is altogether independent of any recognised principle. It depends entirely on the will of the majority for the time being. Minorities may offer obstruction, cause delay, and, if sufficiently strong, extort compromises. But in the long run the conviction and the will of the majority must prevail; and as that conviction and will is liable to incessant change, there can be no present stability and no guarantee for the future. The body politic has ceased to have a definite belief, or a permanent rule of action.

So great a change in the character of the State could not fail seriously to affect its relations with the Church, as a body distinct from the State, though so closely united to it as to make them appear almost identical. The Church has not only a definite, but an immutable faith, which it is her high mission to maintain, and to impress upon men's minds as the rule both of their belief and their conduct. While the State held, or at least professed to hold, that faith in common with the Church, the relations between the two were naturally harmonious. But since the State has not only ceased to have any definite faith, but has adopted the principle of neutrality between all the conflicting and ever-changing opinions that surge up in the national mind ; since, moreover, the government of the State depends no longer upon the conviction and the will of the Head of the State, but is in the hands of those whom the voice of the majority may from time to time place at the helm as the responsible advisers of the Sovereign, and on whom their precarious position, dependent on the issue of party struggles, imposes a policy of compromise and conciliation towards all parties, there is no basis on which the relation between the State and the Church can be permanently and securely adjusted. Between an institution of immutable character, like the Church, and a body whose character is for ever changing, which, in fact, has no longer any character of its own, such as the State has become, an intimate and stable alliance is morally impossible.

The perception of this moral impossibility has long forced itself on thoughtful minds, and has engendered on the part of the Church a feeling of distrust towards the State. The expediency, nay, the propriety and lawfulness, of alliance with the State has been called in question by those most anxious for the preservation of the Church's character and the maintenance of her faith. The idea of separation between the Church and the State, eagerly demanded by parties hostile to the Church in the body politic, has suggested itself to not a few among the Church's most loyal and most devoted sons ; and if their course of action had been determined by mere theoretical views and abstract reasoning, the separation would before now have been effected. Grave considerations, however, and powerful influences, have hitherto not only prevented actual separation, but have caused it to be looked upon as a misfortune which it is the duty of the Church and of her members to avoid as long as possible. After a union with the State which has endured for centuries—as far back as the existence of both Church and State can historically be traced—such a disruption could not take place without dislocating the Church herself, and throwing her whole organization into a state of confusion. The damage to her temporal possessions and interests which, in such an event, she could hardly fail to sustain, though most serious in itself, would probably prove the least of the evils attendant on the severance of her relations with the State, and the consequent necessity of her reorganizing herself as a distinct institution. Upon these accounts, regard for the welfare of the Church alone would naturally make her most ardent friends slow to take in hand, or to accelerate, the process of separation. But this is not all. The Church does not, nor does she desire to, exist for herself, for her own sake. She knows full well that she exists for the sake of her Divine mission, of the work which her Divine Head has given her to accomplish in the world. She is to leaven the world with her heavenly principles, and to enlighten it with her heaven-taught doctrine. The Church has thus towards the State, upon whose institutions she has been engrafted of old, a sacred duty to perform ; nor is she, in view of her responsibility to her Divine Head, absolved from that duty by the fact that the State fails in the performance of its duty towards her. The case is not one of mere compact between the Church and the State, the covenants of which, if violated by one party, cease to be obligatory upon the other. No breach of covenant, no alienation, no injustice, no hostility and open violence on the part of the State towards the Church can entitle the latter to repudiate her duty towards the State ; simply because that duty grows, not out of a compact with the State, but out of the mission entrusted to her by her

Divine Head. There is but one contingency in which separation from the State is, on the Church's part, justifiable; that is, if the State should carry its hostility and violence so far as to incapacitate the Church for the fulfilment of her Divine mission. In that case, and in that case alone, separation from the State becomes a duty incumbent on the Church. In that case she is bound to sacrifice everything to the one consideration of faithfulness to her mission, for the sake of which she has been called into existence. If separation is to come, it must be forced upon the Church by the State as an unavoidable necessity; the Church never can take the initiative in bringing it about.

It is the sense of all this—the sense of peril to the Church herself, and still more the sense of her duty to the State, as the instrument of Christ for its sanctification—that has withheld the most uncompromising of Churchmen from giving any countenance to the idea of separation between Church and State, even under circumstances of extreme aggravation, such as the intrusion of men of notorious unsoundness into her highest offices, the perversion of justice in the protection of offenders against her doctrine and discipline, and the impediments thrown in the way of her exercising her undoubted and inalienable right of Synodical action.

It is thus that, in spite of the odium brought upon it by Erastian subserviency, the “Royal Supremacy” has been upheld by the conscientious fidelity of those who felt most deeply the grievous acts of injustice perpetrated in its name.

At last the potent spell attached to that imposing phrase, which for a long time past has been the expression of a legal fiction rather than of a constitutional reality, has been broken by an overstrained exercise of the power which it represents. The bow bent beyond its strength has suddenly snapped asunder, and the doctrine of the “Royal Supremacy” has thus been put on its trial. It is true that the circumstances which brought about this crisis in the Church's history did not take place in her ancient home. It is in a branch of the Church recently planted in a distant land that the State has taken the initiative of separation from the Church. The first and decisive step towards it was taken when the Crown, in conceding to some of its colonies independent legislative powers, wholly ignored the existence of the Church, making no provision either for her maintenance and support, or for her internal government and the protection of her rights. The organization, in those dependencies of the Crown, of a political system in which the Church had no place assigned to her, and was not even recognised by name, amounted to a repudiation on the part of the State of all connexion with the Church, and by necessary consequence,

to a virtual renunciation of the powers exercised over the Church, under the name of the Royal Supremacy, by the Head of a State in union with the Church. Acts done in those colonies under colour of the Royal Supremacy, after the State had thus cast off the Church, became *ipso facto* null and void. They might be engrossed on parchment, with the Royal Seal appended thereto, but they could have no force of law. That which they professed to create might have a nominal existence for a time; but upon the first occasion of their validity being put to the test, their inherent invalidity would become apparent, and the system professedly created by them would collapse. This is precisely what has happened in the South African Church. Slow to believe in the actual severance of the union between Church and State—judicially declared by the Supreme Court of Appeal in Ecclesiastical Causes in the case of “Long v. the Bishop of Capetown”—the Church made one more attempt to exercise the powers which the Crown had affected to create for her government. The result is a second and finally conclusive judicial declaration by the very tribunal constituted under the Royal Supremacy, that those powers were illusory, and that the Church has, in those parts of the Queen's dominions, no legal existence. In them the Royal Supremacy has thus nullified itself, and the fact stands confessed by the judicial organ of the Royal Supremacy.

If the Church of South Africa, and other Churches similarly situated, stood alone in the world, the matter would be simple enough. Without troubling themselves any further about the Royal Supremacy, which to them has become a dead letter, they would proceed to organize and govern themselves. Discussion about what has been proved an empty theory would be a mere waste of words. But the Church of South Africa, and other Churches that are in the same case with her, do not stand alone. They are offshoots from the Mother-Church, whose connexion with the State, however seriously damaged, still endures, and in which, therefore, the Royal Supremacy still is more than a mere name, in which it has a real existence and a legal validity. The spiritual link which binds them to the Church from which they sprang is not affected by the difference of their respective legal positions. To preserve that spiritual link intact, is—in the very nature of things must be—the mutual desire of both. It becomes important, therefore, that there should be on both sides a right and a clear understanding. It ought to be made evident that the spiritual unity of the several Churches is a thing wholly apart from the relation in which any of them may stand to the State; that the continuance of that spiritual unity, in closest intimacy of intercommunion, is perfectly compatible

with so striking a difference in their respective constitutions as the recognition of the Royal Supremacy in the one, and its non-recognition in the other. Whereas English Churchmen have been wont to look upon the Royal Supremacy as inseparably bound up with the Church, they have now to learn that the Royal Supremacy, so far from being of the essence of the Church's constitution, is, on the contrary, a mere accident of her position.

To some extent the Anglican mind has been prepared for this lesson by the discussions which have taken place of late years touching the relations of the English Church with the Reformed Episcopal Churches of Scotland and of America. The recognition of these in the character of sister Churches, and the steps taken towards regular intercommunion with them, have tended to dissipate the old traditionary ignorance which took "the Church" to be synonymous with "the Establishment." And if the South African or other Colonial Churches had sprung up by some other process than that of missions sent out from this country, the same kind of recognition would, no doubt, have been unhesitatingly extended to them also. But in their case there is this peculiar feature, not only that the Church from which those missions have gone forth recognised at the time, and still continues to recognise, the Royal Supremacy, but that the Royal Supremacy has, in however irregular a manner, been concerned in sending them forth. The fact that in regard to these dependencies of the Crown the Royal Supremacy had ceased to exist, was not discovered until these Churches had been organized on the erroneous supposition that its power extended to them. Hence the misunderstandings which have cropped up on all sides, and the apparent difficulty of defining and adjusting the position of those Churches with regard to the British Crown, as well as their relations with the Mother Church of England.

In order to a clear and satisfactory settlement of the questions which have thus arisen, it becomes necessary to fall back upon first principles, and to examine into the primary constitution of the Church. By ascertaining what that constitution originally was, we shall be better enabled to understand the modifications which that constitution underwent in process of time, under the influence of varying circumstances, and to form a correct judgment as to what fresh modifications a further alteration of circumstances may render desirable or unavoidable.

Upon the question what was the original constitution of the Church, there can be but one opinion. As constituted by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Church was a pure theocracy. It was He that appointed her rulers, and continued to govern her by their means, through the supernatural guidance of His Holy Spirit. Whatever was done in the

Church was done in the Name and under the authority of Christ Himself, by those to whom He had given charge over her, and by their successors in the Apostolic office. No earthly power was permitted to intervene in her construction or in her government. So rigid was the exclusion of all extraneous authority, that even the surviving remnants of what had been originally a divinely constituted government, the rulers of the Jewish Church, were not permitted to have any hand in the foundation of the Christian Church. There was no other supremacy than the supremacy of Christ. How other supremacies came to spring up afterwards; how, under cover, in the first instance, of submission to the supremacy of Christ, temporal princes came to intrude their secular authority into the kingdom of Christ, exercising over the Church an imperial or royal supremacy; how, in opposition to their interference, a power rose up in the Church herself which, while nullifying, as far as in it lay, the appointment of Christ Himself, personated the supremacy of Christ, and by its fraudulent and extravagant pretensions and tyrannous usurpations rent the Church; how, in the confusion thence arising temporal princes resumed the authority which, once conceded to them, had been wrested from them, and thus in the English Church among others—and in her more systematically than in any other—the Royal Supremacy rose in renewed strength, and altogether superseded the Papal Supremacy,—these are the questions which we must follow up in their historical developments, if we would arrive at a clear and definite idea of the Royal Supremacy, as embodied in the constitution of the branch of the Church Catholic established in, and, as has until lately been imagined, *throughout*, the dominions of the British Crown.

In pursuing this historical inquiry, of which in these pages no more than a brief summary can be attempted, we shall come upon transactions calculated sorely to try our faith, by suggesting doubts of the continuity of the Divine foundation laid by Christ, amidst so many exhibitions of human sin and folly, fraud and violence, laying profane hands on the Church, and, what is still more afflicting, so many base compromises submitted to by the Church herself. We shall find the principle, "*feri non debuit, factum valet*," so constantly and so largely put in practice, that the accumulated instances of "*feri non debuit*" may well suggest a doubt as to the validity of that which has no better warrant to show than "*factum valet*." The admission that such is the case may be painful; but that is no reason for shrinking from it, if it is forced upon us by incontrovertible facts. The trial of our faith may be severe; but it does not follow that it will not be—on the contrary, in proportion to the severity of the trial, we may the more certainly

conclude, that it will be—"found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

Of this, the glorious hope of His appearing, we ought to be more mindful than we are wont to be in the consideration of questions affecting the Church. If we look upon the Church, or rather the portion of her militant on the earth, as if her establishment in this world had been the object of His coming, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the whole design has ended in signal failure. It is only when looking upon the Church militant on earth as upon a preparatory institution, destined in due time and in its turn to pass away, and during its continuance intended to answer no more than a temporary purpose, that we shall be able to reconcile our conception of the Church as a Divine institution with the appearance which she exhibits during the whole course of her history. And while so viewing her, we shall derive much instruction as well as encouragement from a retrospect of the history of the Divine institution which preceded her, the Church of Israel of old. That, too, was originally a pure theocracy; and from the high position which in that character she occupied, she sank down to the lowest stages of oppression and degradation. Rent by schisms, reduced to a state of bondage by heathen conquerors, she too frequently presented a spectacle the very reverse of that which God's chosen and peculiar people might be expected to exhibit. There is, especially in the later periods of her history, scarcely a moment at which the Jew, looking at the condition of the kingdom, might not have adduced, in proof of the utter failure of the national mission and of the glorious promises given by Moses, arguments quite as forcible and as plausible as those by which in our day some rush to the conclusion that the Church of Christ, or at least the particular branch of it to which they belong, has failed, or is on the eve of failure, because she is compelled to acquiesce in some flagrant act of oppression, because some grievous wrong inflicted upon her remains unredressed, some deadly heresy promulgated by some of her office-bearers, escapes, through the protection given to them by the secular powers, the correction and punishment which it deserves. There is nothing more injurious to the cause of truth and religion than the feebleness of faith, the proneness to despair of the Church, exhibited by those who, viewing the course which the appointed conflict of the Church against the world takes, from their own standing-point, and within the often very limited horizon of their personal experience and observation, raise the cry of "The Church in danger," and so spread a panic in the ranks of an army which possibly at that very moment is, on a review of the whole battle-field, in the act of achieving some glorious victory.

So long as the wrong done to the Church, the error advanced against her, is discerned ; so long as faithful voices are raised within her to protest against the one, and to rebuke the other, the Church is in no danger. Is it not more reasonable to assume that the things she suffers are laid upon her by her Divine Head as a chastisement for her sins ; that they are permitted for the express purpose of provoking her to jealousy, of rekindling her zeal, of stimulating her flagging energies, or, it may be, of breaking down some false conceptions, some inveterate prejudices, which she has suffered to grow up within her, to the great injury of the truth of which she is the witness, and of the work which she is to accomplish ?

The lesson which we seem to have most need of learning in this self-willed and impatient age, is "the patience of the saints ;" endurance unto the end in the face of circumstances the most adverse, of difficulties the most appalling. To continue loyal to Christ, and to His holy standard, even when there is a general rout, when all seem to have forsaken Him, and many are turning openly against Him, is the Christian warrior's greatest achievement, his surest title to the unfading crown of glory promised to him as his high reward. No amount of violence which the Church may suffer, can justify him in throwing away his shield and his sword, and giving up her cause in despair. And what encouragement to such faithful perseverance may we not derive from the example of the Jewish Church, from the aspect which she presented on the very eve of her appointed dissolution to make way for a more perfect and more glorious dispensation. Trampled upon by an Edomite king, subjected to the restraining discipline of the Roman eagles, with "Cæsar's judgment seat" for her final court of appeal, she still was—as she had been when her foundation was laid at the foot of Mount Sinai, as she had been in her days of purest theocracy, and in the palmiest days of the king "after His own heart" whom God had set over her—the Church of the Living God. Christ Himself contended for the undiminished authority of her rulers who "sat in Moses' seat ;" He yielded Himself to be arraigned before her ecclesiastical judges who perverted judgment against Him ; and He submitted Himself to the supreme jurisdiction of the heathen governor. Yet that proved the very crisis through which the secret and indefeasible purpose of God, which underlay her whole history, found its triumphant accomplishment !

With these facts before our eyes, it behoves us courageously to maintain our faith in the indefectibility of the Church. Calm reliance on the enduring character of her Divine Commission, and of the Divine Life which dwells within her, is the frame of mind best suited to the

investigation of the questions forced upon her from time to time by the march of events. To a right understanding of her position in relation to the Royal Supremacy at the present moment, when that Supremacy has by its own act become extinct in some of her branches, while in others it still survives, and of the duty incumbent on her to preserve her unity intact under this apparently contradictory state of things, nothing can be more conducive than a firm and unshaken faith in the all over-ruling power of the Supremacy of Christ.

III. THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST.

Two memorable declarations, made by the Divine Founder of the Church, lie at the root of the question of Church authority. The declaration, "All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth,"¹ points Him out as the sole fountain of all authority; the declaration, "Now is My kingdom not of this world,"² indicates the limits within which it was His purpose to confine the exercise of His absolute and exclusive authority during the conflict appointed in the Divine counsel to take place on earth, between the principle of Divine Government and the principle of rebellion against God, which had gained a footing in this world. The end of that conflict, which is still in progress, will be the assertion and acknowledgment of the universal Sovereignty of Christ; when "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of His Christ."³ In the meantime, He is "expecting, till His enemies be made His footstool."⁴

Hence the necessary and important distinction between the all-overruling power and government of God, to which all things are subject, by which the course of events is controlled, by which all the powers that be, even those which by His sufferance for a season resist His will, are ordained,—and the special rule and government exercised by the God-man Christ Jesus within His Church, His Kingdom, which is not of this world, being of an inward and spiritual nature. It is the latter that forms the subject-matter of the present inquiry.

Every kingdom, every rule and government, must be sustained by some power. Of the kingdoms of this world, some are sustained by military, others by naval, others by monetary power. The kingdom

¹ Matt. xxviii. 18.

² John xviii. 36.

³ Rev. xi. 15.

⁴ Heb. x. 13.

of Christ not being of this world, the power by which it is sustained is likewise not of this world; it is, agreeably to the nature of the kingdom, an inward, a spiritual power. That such would be the case, that those whom He had selected as His instruments for the foundation and government of His Kingdom, would be armed with such a power, a power analogous to the nature of His kingdom, the Lord Jesus Christ intimated to them in the plainest terms. The fact constituted the chief topic of His instructions to them; the promise of the Holy Ghost was the leading feature of the discourses He addressed to them, more especially during the latter part of His personal intercourse with them. And on the very eve of His ascension into heaven, thenceforth invisibly to govern His Church by that power, while, in answer to a question of theirs, prompted by their expectation of an outward, an earthly kingdom, He intimated to them that the time when His kingdom should be established in outward and visible power was not yet come, and was kept secret in the counsel of God,¹ He directed them to wait for the bestowal on them of that inward and spiritual power, which would enable them to execute the work with which, as His chosen Apostles, they stood charged. Having commissioned them to "go into all the world," and to "make disciples of all nations,"² He bade them "not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which they had heard of Him," and which He now repeated, declaring unto them that they should "be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."³

And here, for the fuller understanding of the intimate connexion of that power with the entire work of Christ, which resulted, at this stage of the Divine dispensations, in the establishment of His inward and spiritual kingdom on earth, it is to be noted that through all the steps of His personal work on earth that power was with Him, and wrought with Him, from the hour of His baptismal consecration to the hour in which He handed His work, thus far finished, over to His Apostles.⁴ It was by the revelation of that power, which had hitherto wrought with Him and in Him, in personal distinctness from Him as well as oneness with Him and with the Father—by the communication of that same power to them, as the power which was henceforth to work with them and in them, that they were qualified for the execution of the high commission entrusted to them, the foun-

¹ Acts i. 6, 7.

² Mark xvi. 15; Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

³ Acts i. 4, 5.

⁴ Matt. iii. 16, iv. 1; Acts x. 38; Matt. xii. 28; Heb. ix. 14; 1 Pet. iii. 19; Rom. i. 4; 1 Pet. iii. 18; Acts i. 2.

dation and government of His Church, His spiritual kingdom. The Supremacy of Christ over His Church resided in the Holy Ghost imparted to His Apostles.

The appointment of these had been His own personal act. He had chosen them, and ordained them. And when, by the transgression of Judas, a place in the Apostolic college had become vacant, the process of filling it up, being anterior to the descent of the Holy Ghost, was conducted in a manner totally different from that which afterwards obtained in the enlargement and perpetuation of the Christian Ministry. The general body of believers, on the invitation of the Apostles, selected from their own number two men whose primary qualification was, that, like the Apostles, they should have "compained with them all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that He was taken up from them,"¹ and should thus be competent witnesses of His resurrection, as well as of His previous Ministry, and of the Gospel which they were called upon to preach. Two men having been thus selected, a direct appeal was made to the Lord Himself, by the divinely instituted method of casting lots, to decide whether of the two was the man of His choice.² Of this mode of appointment no more is heard afterwards; for the simple reason that, before any other appointments were called for, the Holy Ghost had been poured out upon the Apostles, who were empowered not only to give the Holy Ghost to the baptized by the laying on of their hands,³ and to impart the gifts of the Holy Ghost for the work of the Ministry to those whom they appointed to any office in the Church,⁴ but to transmit the same power to those whom they appointed to succeed them in the Apostolic Office.⁵ The governing power of the Church had thus been supplied, and all future appointments to a share in the execution of Christ's commission, and the government of His Church, were made either by the Apostles, in virtue of the power so bestowed on them, or by special intervention of the Lord Himself, either personally, or by the Holy Ghost. As remarkable instances of the latter kind are to be noted, the laying on of hands upon St. Paul after his conversion by Ananias of Damascus, to the end that he might be filled with the Holy Ghost;⁶ and the consecration of St. Paul and St. Barnabas to the Apostolic office, in consequence of an express command given by the Holy Ghost to the prophets and teachers in the Church at Antioch,⁷ which henceforth became the metropolis of Gentile Christianity. For, whereas, up to

¹ Acts i. 21, 22.

² Acts i. 23—26.

³ Acts viii. 15—18.

⁴ Acts vi. 6; xiv. 23; 1 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Tim. i. 6.

⁵ 1 Tim. v. 22.

⁶ Acts ix. 10—17.

⁷ Acts xiii. 1, 2.

that time both Barnabas and Saul had acted as preachers of the Gospel, the special "work whereunto they were called by the Holy Ghost," and of which, on their return, they rendered an account to the Church in which they had received their consecration for it,¹ included the ordination of ministers and rulers in the Churches founded by their preaching.²

This act of power—the exercise of which, in the case of St. Paul and St. Barnabas, dates from their consecration at Antioch—done in the name and by virtue of the supremacy of Christ, constituted the specific distinction between Apostles and other men ordained to the ministry of the Gospel; and from this time, accordingly, we find St. Paul and St. Barnabas placed, on the same footing with the Twelve originally chosen by Christ Himself, in the rank of Apostles.³ The Church was thus, in the full development of her Apostolic organization, under the rule and government of God the Holy Ghost, through the instrumentality of men endued with the power and authority of the Holy Ghost, and personally directed by Him; in other words, the Church was a pure theocracy, under the supremacy of Christ, exercised through the Holy Ghost. As notable illustrations of this fact, it may be useful to refer to the tremendously impressive vindication of the Apostolic authority as representing the Holy Ghost in the case of Ananias and Sapphira;⁴ to the interposition of the Holy Ghost in determining the distinct spheres of action of particular Apostles;⁵ and to the striking formula adopted in the promulgation of the first synodical decree, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us."⁶

The perpetuation of this constitution to after ages, by the transmission of the Holy Ghost, and therewith of the power and authority necessary for the government of the Church, from the hands of the Apostles—sent by Christ with power to send others after them, even as Christ Himself was sent by the Father, with power to send them⁷—to the hands of those appointed by them, first to assist, and afterwards to succeed them, in their labours, while variously indicated in the Apostolic writings,⁸ is directly attested, in the most ancient document of the post-Apostolic age, by the pen of one of the fellow-labourers and immediate successors of the Apostles,⁹ and runs down to the present day, as a notorious fact, through the whole history of the

¹ Acts xiii. 2; xiv. 26.

² Acts xiv. 4, 14; Gal. ii. 8, 9; 1 Cor. ix. 5, 6.

³ Acts xvi. 6, 7. Comp. Gal. ii. 7—9, and 1 Pet. i. 1.

⁴ Acts xv. 28.

⁵ e.g. Acts xx. 28—30; Eph. iv. 11, 12; 1 Tim. i. 3, 18; v. 17—22; vi. 13, 14; 2 Tim. i. 6, 7, 14; iv. 1—5; Tit. i. 5; ii. 15; iii. 10, 11.

⁶ St. Clem. Rom. ad Cor. i. c. 42, 44.

⁷ Acts xiv. 23.

⁸ Acts v. 1—11.

⁹ John xx. 21.

Catholic and Apostolic Church. In the very nature of things it must endure as long as the commission given by Christ to His Apostles, and the promise attached to it of His presence with them by the Holy Ghost, that is, "unto the end of the world."¹ No violence done to it, no fetters imposed upon it, no interference with it by the intrusion of secular authority into the Church of Christ, however it may from time to time obstruct and impair its action, can possibly abrogate the supremacy of Christ over His Church.

But although in its origin and primary condition the Church was thus a pure theocracy, under the supremacy of Christ, we are not to suppose, on that account, that either the Church placed under this divine government, or the government itself, was exempt from those blemishes and imperfections which, by reason of man's infirmity, attach to everything established among men and carried on through human agency. Herein also the theocratic period of the Christian Church finds its parallel in the corresponding period of the Church of Israel of old. In this we not only read, even under the personal rule of Moses and Aaron, of repeated transgressions of the Divine law, of incessant murmurings, nay, of open revolts, against the Divine government, but we find both Moses and Aaron involved in acts of weakness and even of grave offence,—more especially the latter, who, while invested with the high-priesthood, so far forgot the obligations of his sacred office, as to lend himself to the substitution of idolatry in the place of the true worship.

No case of the same gravity as this occurred, it is true, under the Christian theocracy, at least in the Apostolic age. Of some glaring faults that even Apostles fell into, the record has been preserved in the sacred narrative. Personal partiality and incompatibility of temper for a time separated the two leading Apostles of the Gentiles; though from the friendly allusion made by St. Paul in one of his epistles to "Mark,"—probably the same as the John Mark who gave rise to the difference,—we may infer that the breach was subsequently healed.² Still more serious, affecting the very purity of the faith, was the countenance given at Antioch by St. Peter, and, under the influence of his example, by St. Barnabas also, to the notions of the Judaizers, until the bold and determined conduct of St. Paul recalled them to their sense of duty.³ These examples of human infirmity on the part of Apostles—recorded, doubtless, for this among other purposes—may teach us not to allow our faith in the Divine government of the Church to waver by reason of similar and even graver inconsistencies

¹ Matt. xxviii. 18—20; John xiv. 16—20, 25, 26.

² Acts xv. 36—40; 2 Tim. iv. 11.

³ Gal. ii. 11—16.

with their sacred calling on the part of those on whom in after ages the Divine commission and authority descended by transmission from the Apostles.

While thus, even in the persons of the chief rulers of the Church, human infirmity marred the perfection of her Divine government, instances of delinquency among the people, of unruly conduct, of opposition to, and open revolt against, the Apostles themselves, are numerous, even within the comparatively short period over which the Apostolic writings extend. With the exception of the signal punishment inflicted on Ananias and Sapphira, the means resorted to for the repression of those disorders by the Apostles themselves were, in accordance with the character of their authority, of a strictly spiritual nature ; involving no species of outward punishment or coercion, except so far as the deprivation of the common privileges of Christian worship in milder, and in graver cases expulsion from the body of the Church—a barring out from the assemblies, a cutting off from the body, of the faithful—may be regarded in that light. For particular instances the students of the New Testament will be at no loss ; the Apostolic epistles abound with remonstrances and rebukes addressed to those whose conduct caused offence in the Church, as well as with directions and illustrations as to the course pursued towards offenders. Some points, having a special bearing on Church government, it may be instructive to note.

The city of Corinth, owing to its wealth and luxury, presented a singularly unpromising soil for the good seed of the Gospel. Accordingly we find that disorders of all kinds infested the Church planted there. Those, however, which chiefly concern us, are the divisions caused by party spirit, abusing for its purposes the names of Apostles, St. Paul among the number, and of Christ Himself,¹ and turning the very gifts of the Spirit, bestowed for edification, into means of rivalry and unprofitable display.² To quell these, and to restore discipline, which had become grievously relaxed in many respects, St. Paul deputed certain of his fellow-labourers—more especially Timothy³ at one time, and Titus⁴ at another—trusting that their admonitions and personal influence might be the means of recalling the erring members to a better mind ; he himself endeavouring to effect the same object by his letters of mingled entreaty and remonstrance, addressed to the Church, and by an intimation of his purpose to come among them in person,⁵ which he did not carry out till after considerable delay, with a view to afford them time for amendment, and thus to avoid the necessity of adopting

¹ 1 Cor. i. 11, 12 ; iii. 3, 4.

² 1 Cor. xiv.

³ 1 Cor. iv. 17 ; xvi. 10.

⁴ 2 Cor. vii. 6, 7, 13—15 ; viii. 16—18, 23. ⁵ 1 Cor. xvi. 5—7 ; 2 Cor. x. 1—11.

measures of extreme severity.¹ In one case, indeed, he felt constrained to inflict the terrible penalty of excommunication,—which, however, on sufficient proof of repentance, he afterwards removed,—that is, to use his own words, of “delivering the offender unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.”² Throughout all this the Apostle takes his stand, not upon any external authority conferred on him by the Church, but on the powers inherent in his office as an Apostle, entrusted with the “ministration of the Spirit,”³ expressing withal his apprehension lest the exercise of his ministry, and of its hidden spiritual power, should turn to the destruction of any, instead of, as intended, to their edification, and distinctly warning those whom he addresses, of this inevitable consequence of impenitence and persistence in sin.⁴

Among the questions raised in these Epistles, there is one which in our own day constitutes one of the Church's difficulties, and to which it may, therefore, not be unseasonable to advert—the maintenance, namely, of the Ministry in our own particular branch of the Church, and the supply of the wants of the Church generally, by the pecuniary contributions of her members. To do their part in furtherance of both these objects, the Apostle enjoins as a positive duty on all the members of the Church;⁵ but the performance of it is not exacted from them by way of formal impost, but urged upon their consciences, with the addition of certain suggestions as to the time and mode of discharging so essential a part of their Christian duty.⁶ To ourselves, as members of a Church planted in the very centre of the world's commerce, in the wealthiest country on the face of the earth, it is more especially instructive to note the significant fact, that the Corinthian Church, being one of the richest, if not the richest, among the branches of the infant Church, was more than commonly remiss in the discharge of this duty; so much so, that the Apostle himself had to fall back upon the labour of his own hands for his personal support⁷—a circumstance the more remarkable from its contrast with the liberality shown by other Churches out of their “deep poverty.”⁸

Prominent among the subjects to which the attention and dis-

¹ 1 Cor. iv. 18, 19, 21; 2 Cor. i. 23; ii. 1; x. 2, 8—13; xii. 20, 21; xiii. 1—3, 10.

² 1 Cor. v. 3—5; 2 Cor. ii. 6, 7; vii. 8—12.

³ 1 Cor. iv. 1; v. 4; ix. 1, 2; xiv. 37; 2 Cor. iii. 5—8; v. 19, 20; x. 4—6, 13; xii. 19; xiii. 3.

⁴ 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16; iv. 3, 4; x. 8.

⁵ 1 Cor. ix. 7—15.

⁶ 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2; 2 Cor. viii. 6—8; ix. 1—7.

⁷ 1 Cor. ix. 12, 15; 2 Cor. xi. 8—10; xii. 13—17; Acts xviii. 3.

⁸ 2 Cor. viii. 1—4; xi. 9.

disciplinary action of the Apostles was directed, was the preservation of the faith in purity and integrity.¹ They had not only to propagate the doctrines of the Gospel, but to guard them against corruption by the admixture of erroneous doctrines, disseminated by false teachers, who were either ordained ministers of the Church that had "made shipwreck of their faith," or mere pretenders to a Divine commission.² All the Apostolic Epistles testify to the existence of this danger; and the measures taken to meet it varied according to the character of the false doctrines, the audacity of the pretensions put forth by those who taught them, and the extent of the mischief which they caused. In some cases a simple injunction to avoid such false teachers was deemed sufficient;³ in others, they were authoritatively rebuked,⁴ or removed from the communion of the faithful.⁵ Their real character as impostors, as emissaries of Satan, was exposed,⁶ and solemn sentences of condemnation pronounced against them, sometimes in general terms, and sometimes individually and by name.⁷

On examining into the nature of the disorders complained of in the various passages indicated above, it will be found that while placed under the immediate supremacy of Christ, ruled over by His own chosen Apostles, who were endued with both ordinary and extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, the Church had difficulties of precisely the same nature to contend with as those to which in our own day it is thought so intolerable that she should be subject. The weapons which she then used for her defence are still at her disposal. If secular courts, either through ignorance or through partiality, refuse to give to her that outward protection to which, as a Church united to the State, she is justly entitled, the spiritual weapons which in the Apostolic age she wielded with effect for the vindication of her faith, and the maintenance of her authority, are still at her disposal. While it is in the power of those who adhere faithfully to the Church's doctrine and discipline to eschew promoters of unbelief and fomenters of discord—and not only to eschew them, but publicly before all the world to confute and to rebuke them; while, even in a diocese in which they are regarded with favour or treated with connivance,

¹ 1 Tim. i. 3, 4; iv. 16; vi. 20; 2 Tim. i. 13, 14; ii. 2; iv. 2; Tit. i. 9; ii. 7, 8; Jude 3.

² Acts xx. 29, 30; 1 Cor. xv. 12; Gal. i. 7; v. 10, 12; 1 Tim. iv. 1—3; vi. 20, 21; 2 Tim. i. 15; ii. 16—18; iii. 6—9; iv. 3, 4; Tit. i. 10—16; 2 Pet. ii. 1—3, 17, 18; iii. 16; 1 John ii. 18, 19; iv. 1—3; Jude 4, 19.

³ Rom. xvi. 17, 18; 1 Tim. vi. 3—5; 2 Tim. ii. 16; 2 John 7—10.

⁴ Tit. i. 13; 3 John 9, 10.

⁵ Gal. v. 12; Tit. iii. 10, 11.

⁶ 2 Cor. xi. 13—15; 1 Tim. iv. 1.

⁷ Gal. i. 8, 9; v. 10; 2 Thess. ii. 12; 1 Tim. i. 19, 20; 2 Tim. iv. 14; 2 Pet. ii. 1—3, 17; Jude 11—13.

unsound clergymen can be excluded from every altar and every pulpit, except their own, by the single veto of their sounder brethren ; while any Bishop, jealous of the purity of the doctrine taught in his diocese, can interdict all strangers from exercising any functions within it, and, though unable legally to deprive of his benefice, yet can morally isolate, an unsound clergyman belonging to it by his word, his influence, his example ; while the synodal assemblies of the Church have power to pronounce solemn sentences of condemnation upon heretical writings ; it cannot be said that she is altogether helpless and unable to protect herself and the truth of which she is the witness and the keeper. She may be defrauded for a time of the emoluments which a heretical clergyman upheld by the secular arm receives, and to which morally he is not entitled ; she may, by the maintenance of such a man in his position, especially if that position be an eminent one, be injured, affronted, insulted ; but there the mischief ends. She may clear herself by solemn protests of all participation in the wrong that is perpetrated, and of all responsibility for it. Under the supremacy of Christ the Church had no coercive power to silence a teacher of error who found means to maintain his outward position, and to draw disciples after him. All that even Apostles could do, was to denounce him, to hold no intercourse with him, to mark him as a man to be avoided, to unmask the falsehood of his doctrine, and to proclaim aloud the sentence of God's condemnation against it. As to the result of their doing all this, the Apostles were compelled to abide by the event, whatever that might be ; they could not control the opinions either of the outside world, or of all the individual members of the Church. If they carried with them the great body of the Church, they achieved as much as was possible in their position, and no more than may now be effected, though by somewhat different means, and with some slight differences in the outward aspect of things. In saying this, it is not intended to recommend acquiescence in a position of which the Church has just reason to complain ; on the contrary, the duty of protesting, and of endeavouring to obtain redress, is rendered all the more forcible by this reference to the analogous difficulties of Apostolic times. But a consideration of them may serve to mitigate our impatience under the sense of injury and injustice done to the Church ; and, above all, it will preserve us from the danger of having our faith shaken by anomalies resulting from her position, which need not, and do not, affect her intrinsic character.

Seen from a merely external point of view, the circumstances of the Apostolic age present some features of striking similarity to those of our own day. Defiance of the authority of the Church, even by

office-bearers within her pale, was not then unknown. In one particular instance we find that it was carried to the extreme audacity of an Apostle being excommunicated by a person who occupied a position of authority in the Church.¹ Nor were points of difference wanting among those who were agreed in the main foundation of the faith. The practice of the Church at Antioch, the metropolis of Gentile Christendom, differed materially from that of the Church at Jerusalem; and it was deemed no inconsistency, but, on the contrary, a point of Christian duty, for an Apostle to conform to the one or the other, as circumstances might require from time to time. St. Peter, while at Antioch, was expected to "eat with the Gentiles;" while at Jerusalem, St. Paul, acting on the counsel of his brother Apostles, conformed not only to the obligatory, but to the voluntary observances of the Mosaic law.²

These points of difference rendered it necessary for the Apostles to come to an understanding among one another as to their respective lines of action and spheres of duty. This was effected by conferences between them, by a scrupulous care not to interfere with one another's work, and mutual recognition of each other's authority;³ and, in regard to the leading controversy of that age, by a synodical assembly, in which both sides were fairly represented, and whose decision guaranteed mutual freedom and forbearance within the limits of the common faith.⁴ Diversity of practice did not involve latitudinarianism of belief, nor did it stand in the way of brotherly intercourse.

It is interesting to observe how, in that first period of the Church's existence, under the supremacy of Christ, represented and exercised by His Apostles, the essential difficulties with which the Church would have to contend to the end of time were foreshadowed, and the principles by which her action would have to be guided in after ages were clearly laid down by Apostolic authority. As the Church expanded herself by the propagation of her faith, and the wider and wider acceptance which it obtained, those germs of both good and evil developed themselves in an ever-changing variety of aspect, without detriment to her historical continuity or her essential unity.

One of the first and most obvious results of the Church's expansion was the development of local organization. Even while the Apostles exercised a general supervision over the Churches founded by them, local ministries for carrying on the Church's work, in the promulgation of the Gospel, and the edification of her members, were established by

¹ 3 John 9, 10.

² Gal. ii. 12; Acts xxi. 20—26.

³ Gal. i. 18, 19; ii. 1—10; Rom. i. 13; xv. 20—22; 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16.

⁴ Acts xv. 1—29.

the Apostles themselves.¹ In the mother Church at Jerusalem a local Apostolate sprang up, which was committed to James, "the Lord's brother," and in virtue of which it was he who presided at the Council convened at Jerusalem, on the question that had arisen between the Jewish and the Gentile branches of the Church, and at the close of the discussion summed up the argument, and pronounced the decision or "sentence" of the Council.²

Apostolic powers were committed over particular Churches to the principal fellow-labourers of the Apostles, during the lifetime of the latter;³ and from ecclesiastical history we learn that, by means of these appointments, provision was made for the government of all the Churches by men clothed with Apostolic authority, after the Apostles themselves had departed.⁴ Thus the Episcopate rose as a local insti-

¹ Acts xi. 30; xiv. 23; xx. 17; Tit. i. 5; 1 Pet. v. 1.

² Acts xii. 17; xxi. 18; Gal. i. 19; ii. 9, 12; Acts xv. 13, 19.

³ 1 Tim. i. 3, 18; Tit. i. 5; Rev. ii. 1, 8, 12, 18; iii. 1, 7, 14.

⁴ The following testimonies from the early Fathers place the succession of the Apostolic Ministry, as an institution bequeathed to the Church by the Apostles, beyond the possibility of doubt and the reach of cavil.

Speaking of the labours of the Apostles in the promulgation of the Gospel and the foundation of Churches, ST. CLEMENT of Rome, says:—"They (the Apostles) went forth in full assurance of the Holy Ghost, gospelling that the kingdom of God was at hand. And preaching through countries and cities they appointed their firstfruits, having proved them by the Spirit, as Overseers (Bishops) and Ministers of them that should believe."—1 Ep. ad Cor. c. 42.—And further on, having referred to the vindication of Aaron's sacerdotal authority by the miracle of the rod that budded, he goes on to say, "Our Apostles also knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be contention about the dignity of the oversight (the episcopate). For this reason, having perfect foreknowledge, they appointed those before mentioned, and gave them the pastoral charge for after times, that when they themselves should have fallen asleep, other approved men might succeed them in their office."—*Ibid.* c. 44.

The importance attached by ST. IGNATIUS to the Episcopal office, as being the representation of Christ, the impersonation, so to speak, of His supremacy over the Church, is well known. See among those of his Epistles which are acknowledged as genuine by sound critics, the following passages:—*Ad Ephes.* c. 4, 6; *ad Magnes.* c. 6; *ad Trall.* c. 3, 13; *ad Smyrn.* c. 8.

Appealing to the concordant testimony of the Bishops in the several Churches to the truth of the Faith delivered by the Apostles, ST. IRENEUS says, "We are enabled to enumerate those who were by the Apostles appointed Bishops in the Churches and their successors to our own time." Proceeding to particularise the succession of "the Church founded at Rome by the two most glorious Apostles, Peter and Paul," he says that "they handed over the Episcopal office to Linus, mentioned by Paul in his Epistles to Timothy;" that "to him Anacleus succeeded;" that "after him, third in order from the Apostles, Clemens obtained the Episcopate;" and as his successors he enumerates Euaeristus, Alexander, Xystus, Telesphorus, Hyginus, Pius, Anicetus, Soter; after whom, at that time, Eleutherius was in possession of the Episcopate, being the twelfth in order from the Apostles. And further he instances "Polycarp, who had not only been made a disciple by the Apostles and been conversant with many who had seen Christ, but had by the Apostles been appointed Bishop in the Church of Smyrna, in Asia, whom Irenæus himself remembered to have seen in his youth."—*St. Iren. ad Hær. l. iii. c. 3.*

TERTULLIAN in his "Vindication of the Faith against the Heretics," challenges the [latter

tution of Apostolic origin and Catholic reach, answering to the famous description given of it by St. Cyprian: *Episcopatus unus est, cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur*; ¹ or, as he elsewhere expresses it, *Episcopatus unus, Episcoporum multorum concordie numerositate diffusus*.²

Having thus ascertained the form which the purely theocratic government of the Church assumed while the supremacy of Christ was represented by His Apostles, acting under the inspiration and direction of the Holy Ghost, as well as the mode in which the continuance of this Apostolic government was provided for by transmission from the Apostles to lines of successors appointed to rule over particular Churches, it only remains, at this stage of the inquiry, to note certain special points observable in the growth of the organization so established in the first instance by the Apostles themselves, and the position in which the Church stood towards the secular power, antecedently to the intrusion of the latter into the government of the Church.

latter to "exhibit the order of their Bishops, coming down by succession from the beginning in such wise that the first Bishop in the line should have had for his consecrator and predecessor some Apostle, or some Apostolic man contemporaneous with the Apostles. For in this manner the Apostolic Churches bring down their registers; as the Church of the Smyræans records Polycarp, appointed by John; that of the Romans, Clement, ordained by Peter; and, as the other Churches likewise show the transmission of the Apostolic seed to them through men appointed to the Episcopate by the Apostles."—*Tertull. de Præscr. Hæret.* c. 32. Comp. cc. 20, 21.

ST. CYPRIAN, vindicating the succession against spurious Bishops of schismatical ordination, states that "of old" (*jam pridem*, he wrote this A.D. 252) "through all the provinces and cities Bishops were ordained, old in years, incorrupt in faith."—*Ep. ad Antonianum* 55 (ed. Fell). In a letter to Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, he thus sets forth the work and office of a bishop:—"This is and ought to be our chief endeavour, that we should be careful, as far as in us lies, to maintain the unity transmitted from the Lord and through the Apostles to us their successors. *Ad Cornelium*, Ep. 45. And in support of the authority of the Episcopal office he uses the following argument: "Christ says to the Apostles, and thereby to all the Bishops who succeed the Apostles by vicarious ordination, 'He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that heareth Me, heareth Him that sent Me; and he that rejecteth you, rejecteth Me; and he that rejecteth Me, rejecteth Him that sent Me.'"—*Ad Florentinum*, Ep. 66.

Lastly, EUSEBIUS, in his history, has a special chapter "On the first succession from the Apostles," in which he states, on the authority of existing records, that Timothy was the first bishop appointed over the Church at Ephesus; Titus over the Churches of Crete; Crescens over the Galatian Churches; Linus first and Clement third, in order, over the Church of the Romans; and Dionysius the Areopagite over the Church at Athens.—*Euseb. Hist. Eccl.* l. iii. c. 4.

In addition to these and other express testimonies, there is the fact, apparent on the face of all the documents preserved to our time from the first three centuries of the Christian era, that the Episcopate existed throughout the Church as an institution recognised by all to be of Apostolic origin and authority, on which the whole framework of the Church's organization rested, and to which her government was committed.

¹ St. Cypr. De Unitate Ecclesie, c. 3.

² St. Cypr. ad Antonianum. Ep. 55 (ed. Fell).

As a matter of obvious policy, the Apostles had selected for the bases of their operations the principal cities of the different countries into which they carried the Gospel. They were sent forth to make war upon the false religions set up by the Prince of this world, during the season of divine connivance which preceded the evangelization of the world;¹ and accordingly they attacked the enemy in his strongholds, before they attempted the conquest of the surrounding country. Thus it came to pass that the first Churches were founded in the cities which had attained the greatest prominence under the old civilization. It was from these most ancient and central Churches that the Gospel was gradually diffused into outlying districts; and the natural result of the growth of the Church by this process was that her government fell into a system of division by provinces, analogous to those of the civil government. The Bishop of the central Church from which the missions into the province went forth, was in the first instance the bishop of the whole province; and when the importance of any provincial mission required a bishop of its own to be set over it, not only did it rest with him to make the necessary arrangements, but he preserved ever after a pre-eminence among the bishops of the province. Hence arose the office of Metropolitan, as distinct from that of Diocesan Bishop, in the several provinces; and a still higher rank of Primate, or, as he was afterwards called, Patriarch, whose superintending power extended over a number of provinces and their Metropolitans.²

The inequality of rank thus created among men who, as far as their spiritual power was concerned, were on a perfect equality—all of them successors of the Apostles, all of them set to rule over the Church in their respective spheres as the representatives of Christ under the guidance of the Holy Ghost—was not altogether confined to the relative position of the Bishops of the chief cities and of the Churches that had gradually sprung up in the provinces of which they were the social and political centres. Other circumstances tended to give a yet further pre-eminence to particular sees and their occupants. Jerusalem, the city consecrated by the hallowed associations of the old covenant, the city in which the Church was founded by the death and resurrection of her Divine Head and by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, was from the first the place in which the life of the Church centred—the heart, as it were, from which the life's blood of the whole body issued, and to which it returned—and the Church at

¹ Acts xvii. 30, 31.

² Ap. Can. 84. Compare on this subject Beveridge, *Codex Cann. Eccl. Prim. Vind.* l. ii. c. v. § 12, 13; Usher's *Original of Bishops and Metropolitans. Works* vol. vii. p. 48.

Jerusalem and her Bishop accordingly occupied a position of pre-eminence among all the Churches.¹ Warned of the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, the Church in that city took temporary refuge in Pella, from which place, however, it subsequently returned; and, although shorn by the force of events of much of its influence in the general government of the Church, it continued to retain at least a nominal distinction among the chief Churches of the earth.²

The Church which, next in order of time, rose to pre-eminence among the Churches of Christendom, was the Church at Antioch. It was here that, by the consecration of St. Paul and St. Barnabas, by express command of the Holy Ghost, the Gentile Apostolate, as distinct from the Apostolate of the Circumcision, was founded;³ and it was here that believers in the Gospel of Gentile origin, not being identified with the Jews, first received the distinctive appellation of Christians.⁴ It was the Bishop of this Church who, having received his bishopric from Apostolic hands, rendered, in the age immediately following the Apostles, the new faith illustrious by his glorious martyrdom in the Imperial city.⁵ And that the pre-eminence which the Church of Antioch had thus obtained as the metropolis of Gentile Christendom was maintained throughout the whole period now under consideration, is evident from the rank assigned to her Bishop at the first Œcumenical Council.⁶

Somewhat later in point of time, and upon grounds altogether different, the Church of Alexandria and her Bishop rose to a position of pre-eminence, and exercised an extensive influence upon the development of Christian doctrine. Famous already in the pagan world as a seat of learning and philosophy, and connected with Jewish theology by the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, which paved the way for the preaching of the Gospel among the Gentiles or "Greeks," the city of Alexandria became a point of attraction to the more studious and speculative among the converts to the faith—the *alma mater* of Christian theology. The catechetical school founded in it under the auspices of its Bishop, contributed largely to the dissemination of the Holy Scriptures, and to the formation of a Christian literature. The doctors whom it produced, though not invariably sound in the faith, were held in high repute throughout the Churches, and took a leading

¹ Acts i. 4, 8, 12—14; v. 28; vi. 7; viii. 1, 14—16, 25; ix. 26—28; Gal. i. 17—19; Acts xxvi. 20; xi. 1, 2, 22; xii. 25; Rom. xv. 19; Acts xxiii. 11; xv. 2—29; xvi. 4; xviii. 21, 22; xix. 21; xx. 16; 1 Cor. xvi. 3; Rom. xv. 25, 26, 31; Acts xxi. 17—19.

² Conc. Nic. can. 7.

³ Acts xiii. 1, 2; xiv. 26; xv. 22, 23, 30, 35; xviii. 22; Gal. ii. 11.

⁴ Acts xi. 26.

⁵ Martyrium St. Ignatii.

⁶ Conc. Nic. Œc. i. can. 6.

part in the controversies which resulted in the settlement of authoritative definitions of the Faith. Accordingly we find the rank which the Church of Alexandria had attained by common consent, recognised at a subsequent date in the same documents which attest the precedence given to the Bishops of Jerusalem and of Antioch.¹

More eminent still than any of these was, in this first purely theocratic period of the Church's history, the Church at Rome. Rome being the imperial city, the capital of the world, it was but natural that the Church established there should occupy a position of proportionate importance. We have Apostolic authority for the fact that "her faith was spoken of throughout the whole world."² She reckoned as her founders the two chief Apostles of Jewish and Gentile Christianity; the latter of whom, out of deference for his brother Apostle, towards whom he stood in a position of much delicacy, hesitated for a long time to visit her in person; nor did he eventually do so until he was brought thither forcibly by the course of events.³ In proof of his

¹ Conc. Nic. Œc. i. can. 6, 7.

² Rom. i. 8; xvi. 19.

³ From the whole argument of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, it is evident that the Jewish element was very strong, if it did not actually predominate, in the Church at Rome. This points at once to St. Peter, to whom was committed the apostleship of the circumcision, as that of the uncircumcision was committed to St. Paul (Gal. ii. 7), as the "other man" upon whose "foundation" the latter did not wish to "build." As St. Paul distinctly assigns this as the cause by which he was "much hindered" from paying a visit to the Church at Rome, though "having a great desire" to do so for "many years" (Rom. xv. 20—24; cf. i. 10, 11), the question naturally suggests itself who that "other man" was. That he must have been one of the Apostles is clear from the deference for his authority, which underlay St. Paul's hesitation on the subject; and among all the Apostles there was none towards whom St. Paul stood in a position of more delicacy than towards St. Peter. Their respective spheres of action required to be settled by special conference (Gal. ii. 6—9); the great point of difference between Jewish and Gentile converts rendered a synodical discussion and determination necessary (Acts xv. 1—32); and St. Peter's conduct at Antioch, the Mother Church of Gentile Christianity, brought the two Apostles into personal collision (Gal. ii. 11—14). All this indicates that the mutual position of these two chief Apostles of the circumcision and the uncircumcision respectively, was one of great delicacy; and the unwillingness of St. Paul to incur the charge of undue interference with St. Peter's sphere of labour is thus easily and satisfactorily accounted for. It is much to be regretted that a weak fear of making a dangerous concession to Romish controversialists by the admission that St. Peter was the founder of the Church at Rome, should have led many Protestant writers to call in question—nay, some of them absolutely to deny—the fact that St. Peter ever was at Rome. That fact is attested by testimonies so numerous and so unanimous from the earliest ecclesiastical writings, that without a strong controversial bias the idea of denying it would scarcely enter any one's mind. Nor does the admission of it in the remotest degree tend to support the Romish figment of Papal Supremacy on the basis of a unique and exclusive succession from St. Peter. On the contrary, the very testimonies of antiquity which establish the fact of St. Peter having exercised his apostolate at Rome (though not exclusively in that city), also prove that Church to have been under the joint rule of St. Peter and St. Paul for some time before their martyrdom; after St. Paul's long-cherished intention to proceed to Rome,

subsequent association with St. Peter in the government of the Church at Rome, we have the uniform testimony of the earliest ecclesiastical writers, who record not only the fact that they conjointly presided over her, but that they both sealed their apostolic labours at Rome by the blood of martyrdom.¹ The high position which the Church at Rome had thus naturally attained, and which she preserved throughout the first ages, is attested even by those who took a foremost part in checking the arrogance occasionally displayed by some of her Bishops at a time when they themselves did not dream of the extravagant pretensions advanced in after ages by their successors.²

Another, and in the early ages universally recognised, claim to distinction, which the Churches of Jerusalem, of Antioch, and of Rome, shared with many other Churches of inferior note, was the fact of their having one or more of the Apostles for their founders and first rulers. The Bishops of all these, being in a local, as well as in a general and spiritual sense, successors of the Apostles, were ever regarded with special deference by the Bishops of other less favoured Churches, and their sees or chairs were distinguished by the appellation, "Apostolic see or chair,"³ a designation which was subsequently applied to all Episcopal sees, and, in still later times, has, like the title "Catholic," been usurped exclusively by the Roman Church.

By the Episcopate, so constituted, the government of the clergy and laity was duly provided for in all the Churches.⁴ Every Bishop, in matters concerning his own Church and diocese, was supreme.⁵ The relation between him and his clergy, whether presbyters or deacons, was one of strict subordination. The latter were considered as acting by

—for the protection, as his Epistle would seem to indicate, of the freedom of the Gentile converts from Judaizing tendencies,—had been realized, in a manner different from what he had anticipated, by his forcible removal to that city in consequence of his appeal to Cæsar. (Acts xxv. 10—12; xxvi. 32; xxvii; xxviii.)

¹ St. Clem. Rom. ad Cor. Ep. i. c. 5; St. Ign. ad Rom. c. 4; St. Dion. Cor. ad Rom. ap. Euseb. H. E. l. ii. c. 25; St. Iren. adv. Hær. l. iii. c. 1, 3; Caius Presb. adv. Proc. ap. Euseb. H. E. l. ii. c. 25; Clem. Alex. ap. Euseb. H. E. l. vi. c. 14; Tertull. De Præscr. Hæret. c. 36, De Bapt. c. 4; Origen ap. Euseb. H. E. l. iii. c. 1; St. Cyprian, ad Cornel. Ep. 59; ad Antonian. Ep. 55; Lactant. Div. Inst. l. iv. c. 21, De Morte Persec. c. 2; St. Athanas. Apol. de fuga, c. 18; Euseb. H. E. l. ii. c. 14, 25, l. iii. c. 2.

² St. Iren. adv. Hær. l. iii. c. 3. Comp. Euseb. H. E. l. v. c. 24; St. Cypr. ad Corn. Epp. 59, 60; comp. ad Steph. Ep. 72; ad Pomp. Ep. 74.

³ Tertull. de Præscr. Hæret. c. 36.

⁴ "The ordination of Bishops and the organization of the Church runs down through the changes of times and successions, so that the Church is constituted upon the Bishops; and every proceeding of the Church is governed by those chief officers."—St. Cypr. Lapsis Ep. 33.

⁵ "Every Bishop," says St. Cyprian, "has in the government of the Church the free discretion of his own will, hereafter to give account to the Lord of his conduct."—Ad Steph. Ep. 72.

delegation from the Bishop, without whose sanction and concurrence nothing was to be done in the Church. This principle, broadly laid down by St. Ignatius,¹ was universally recognised, and embodied in the early Canons.² At the same time, the Bishops made a practice of consulting the clergy, and even the laity, on matters connected with the administration of their office; more especially in the election of candidates for the clerical office, in which Apostolic precedent indicated that the general body of the Church should have a voice.³ The same Ignatius, who dwells so emphatically on the dignity of the Episcopal office, as being in the very place of God and of Christ, constantly associates the presbyters and deacons with the Bishop, as having a claim to the veneration and obedience of the flock.⁴ St. Cyprian repeatedly appeals to his practice of consulting both clergy and laity.⁵ And the same practice was followed elsewhere, with various modifications as to the extent to which the wishes of the Church at large were taken into account. In the election of the Bishops themselves, the principle generally acted upon was, that no Bishop should be forced upon a Church against the will of the general body, or even of a considerable minority, of the clergy and laity;⁶ while, on the other hand, the fact that the power of ordination was in the hands of the Metropolitan and his Synod afforded an ample security against improper appointments.⁷ To obtain the Episcopate either by purchase, through the influence of secular princes, or through nepotism, was prohibited under stringent penalties, and promotions made by such means were null and void.⁸

The Episcopal rule thus established in each particular Church sufficed for its ordinary government. When that rule was interrupted by the see becoming vacant, the Metropolitan and his Synod provided for its perpetuation by the election and ordination of a successor. The same organization was brought into play when questions arose which were too important to be decided by the Bishop with the assent of his clergy and laity. Recourse was then had to the authority of the Metropolitan and the Provincial Synod. In the first instance, probably, conferences of Bishops to decide points of difficulty were held as occa-

¹ St. Ign. ad Trall. c. 2; ad Philad. c. 7; ad Smyrn. c. 8; ad Polyc. c. 6.

² Ap. Can. 39.

³ Acts i. 15—23; vi. 2—6.

⁴ See the passages quoted above, note 1.

⁵ St. Cyp. ad Presbyteros et Diaconos, Ep. 14, 38; ad Antonianum, Ep. 55; ad Cornel. Ep. 59, ad Felicem Presb. Ep. 67.

⁶ St. Cyp. ad Felic. Presb. Ep. 67; Constit. Apost. l. viii. c. 4. Compare also on this subject the statement of Leo. I. who, although belonging to a later age, no doubt correctly sets forth the principle by which this matter had always been regulated; Leon. M. ad Anastas. Ep. xiv. c. 5.

⁷ Can. Ap. 34.

⁸ Can. Ap. 29, 30.

sions arose ; but, after a time, it was found more expedient to hold Synods at stated times ; and an early Canon requires them to be held twice a year.¹ The determinations of these Synods became the rules or canons by which the affairs of the Churches were regulated. The constant intercourse kept up between the Churches led to the adoption of similar rules in different Churches ; and at a very early date a collection of such rules as were generally observed was made, and, under the name of "*Apostolic Canons*,"² obtained universal authority. Other Canons were enacted by different Councils as occasion required, whose authority was in the first instance confined to the Churches which had adopted them, but which, in course of time, were embodied in what, in later ages, became the Canon Law of the Church.

The government of the Church being thus amply provided for by officers invested with Apostolic authority, ruling in the name of Christ, and by regulations framed and supported by common authority and consent, the body of Christians, although widely spread through the most distant countries, presented a united aspect to the world around. It differed, however, from all the institutions hitherto known to the world in this, that its constitution, the powers exercised by its rulers, and the privileges enjoyed by its members, were all—as in their origin, so in their nature—purely spiritual. There was nothing of a coercive character. Submission to the discipline of the body was a voluntary act ; the loss of membership, by excommunication, was the only penalty incurred by disobedience.

Yet, existing in the world, the Church was exposed to contact with the world. As a voluntary association, she had to maintain her ground in the midst of systems, social and political, to which she was an entire stranger. At first she found all these systems hostile to her ; and, as a natural consequence, the lives and the property of her members were in constant jeopardy. It was only after a long continuance of patient suffering, amidst tortures, martyrdom, and the loss of all things, that the Church, through the influence of her ever-increasing numbers, obtained, first toleration, and, in course of time, recognition as a corporate body. Her property, the only part of her existence which, besides the persons of her members, was tangible to the world, shared all the vicissitudes of her precarious existence. That property, arising from the offerings of the faithful, was, by her own internal regulations, placed in the hands of the Bishop,³ with

¹ Can. Ap. 37.

² See Beveridge's *Synodicon*, and his *Vindication of the Canons of the Primitive Church*.

³ Can. Ap. 4, 38, 41. Comp. Justin Martyr, *Apol. i.* ; St. Cypr. *ad Caldonium et Herculanium*, Ep. 41.

whom the remuneration of his clergy, distribution of relief to the poor, and other applications of the Church funds rested ; it being specially provided that it should not in any way be mixed up with his private property ;¹ and that the Bishop should not suffer any of his clergy to want for the necessaries of life ; the Bishop who in any case permitted this being deemed a murderer of his brother.² In time of peace, and in the hands of a faithful Bishop, this property was secure ; but in times of persecution it became, like the lives of the members of the Church, a prey. From malversation by an unfaithful Bishop it could only be protected by the spiritual discipline of the Church ; and if that were set at defiance by any Bishop, the Church had no remedy against him, except by an appeal to the civil courts.

For a long time, and as a general rule, that appeal was not resorted to, as the result was not likely to prove favourable to the Church's interests. The time came, however, when pagan legislation recognised the corporate character of the Church, and gave her protection for her property. Under the reign of Alexander Severus, a case occurred in which the Emperor interfered to prevent an act of contemplated Church spoliation, though the ground on which he did so gives no very exalted idea of the estimation in which he held the Church. The question turned upon the possession of a piece of land on which the Christians had erected a church ; and the Emperor's decision was, that such employment of it was preferable to its being made use of as the site of a tavern.³ More important, in every sense, was the decision obtained under the reign of Aurelian, for the protection of the Church's property against Paul of Samosata, Patriarch of Antioch, who, having been deposed by a Council of Bishops, on account of his heretical opinions, as well as of gross breaches of ecclesiastical discipline, refused to give up possession of the church. The Emperor having been appealed to on the subject, and finding that the contumacious Patriarch was supported by a party of his own, wisely abstained from entertaining the question on the merits. He referred the matter to a Synod of Italian Bishops ; and on their report that the Patriarch of Antioch had been justly deposed from his office, he caused him to be ejected, and gave possession to his canonically-ordained successor.⁴

This case, while it illustrates in a striking manner the proper course to be pursued by the Civil Magistrate in questions affecting property arising out of ecclesiastical causes, is remarkable, moreover, as a practical illustration of the principle that, in cases of delinquency by a Bishop, the duty of protecting the faith of the Church and her dis-

¹ Ap. Can. 40.

² Lamprid. Vita Alex. Sev. c. 49.

³ Ap. Can. 59.

⁴ Euseb. Hist. E. l. vii. c. 30.

cipline devolved upon the general body of Bishops.¹ In cases of minor importance, the spiritual jurisdiction vested in the Metropolitan and his comprovincials sufficed to maintain order ;² but the case of the delinquent Patriarch of Antioch shows how the authority of the entire Episcopate could be brought to bear, for the deliverance of the Church from heresy and scandal, even on a Bishop of the highest rank.

On a review, then, of the Church's constitution and position during the period when she existed as a pure theocracy, we arrive at the conclusion that the spiritual powers conferred by Christ upon His Apostles and their successors, proved amply sufficient for her government. Fiercely persecuted and despoiled though she often was by her enemies, she rose triumphant from every defeat by the spiritual might which she exhibited in the eyes of an astonished world ; and the maintenance of her internal condition in a state of soundness and godly order, amidst numberless disturbances of her peace by men of perverse mind and turbulent spirit, was due to the profound conviction of the great body of her members that those set to rule over her were the representatives and vicegerents on earth of her Supreme Head enthroned in heaven.

¹ St. Cypr. Ep. ad Stephan. 68.

² Ap. Can. 74.

IV. THE IMPERIAL OR ROYAL SUPREMACY.

THE present inquiry has reached a point at which a new element appears in the constitution of that spiritual body, the Church and Kingdom of Christ, which the God-man, the Incarnate Deity, established on foundations purely spiritual, and placed under the rule of men bearing His commission and endowed with supernatural powers of a purely spiritual character—His instruments for the exercise of His own supremacy over it. Hitherto no other authority was acknowledged in that body but the authority of Christ Himself, outwardly represented by the Episcopate, on whom it was conferred through the Apostles by the Holy Ghost, the Vicegerent of Christ. Henceforth an authority which, though not destitute of divine sanction, is yet in its origin and nature of this world, of the earth earthy, appears on the stage, and puts forth a claim to a share in the government of that spiritual body the Church, founded on the fact that, although not of the world, the Church is in the world ; whence it is inferred that some kind of allegiance must be due from the Church to the powers that are set to rule over the world.

So long as those powers maintained towards the Church that attitude of hostility, or, at best, indifference, which they had originally assumed towards her as an alien body, at war with the world's belief, having nothing in common with its spirit and its institutions, the position was an exceedingly simple one. The obedience due from the Church and her members to the temporal power, by virtue of its character as the ordinance of God, was limited to a submissive acknowledgment of the control which *de facto* it possessed, and which it exercised at its own discretion, justly or unjustly, righteously or unrighteously, over persons and property. That which constitutes the essence of the Church—her spiritual life, and its outward manifestation in worship, in Church government, and doctrine—lay in another sphere altogether, being in no sense subject to the rule and cognizance of the civil or temporal power. As a matter of equity the Church and her members had, in common with all other citizens, a claim to protection for both persons and property ; and whenever that claim was recog-

nised, the Church was ready to accept and glad to enjoy that protection. If at any time unfaithfulness to the spiritual power, to Christ, the fountain of that power, was made the condition of such protection, the Church was ready to forego it, and to suffer persecution instead. When faithfulness to Christ was treated as an offence against the temporal power, the Church and her members meekly submitted to whatever penalty, however unjust, the latter might see fit to inflict. They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and cheerfully yielded up their lives, glorying in the death of martyrdom.

Very different was, necessarily, the aspect which the relation between the temporal power and the Church assumed when the former became friendly to the Church, took an interest in her, sought to promote her welfare. In the nature of things it was not to be expected that the aims and interests, and the consequent action, of the temporal power should always be accordant with those of the spiritual power. On the contrary, it could not fail but that many circumstances must arise under which their respective aims and interests would clash, and harmonious action between them be disturbed. Mutual encroachments upon their respective spheres would beget estrangement and distrust, and, under the influence of human passions, lead to violent conflicts. And amidst the complications which thence arose, the path of duty was both less easy to discern and more difficult to follow.

Even retrospectively, from the standpoint of history, it is no easy matter correctly to appreciate the events and circumstances which emerged from the action, concurrent at one time, antagonistic at another, of the two powers, or to form a fair judgment of the motives and conduct of the chief actors in them. The difficulty of doing so is not unfrequently aggravated by the fact, inseparable from the employment of human instrumentality, that the representatives of the spiritual power, being men of like passions with those against whom they were sometimes called on to maintain and to defend Christ's truth and ordinance, were not free from the taint of a worldly bias, or proof against the temptation of using carnal weapons placed within their reach ; while, on the other hand, those to whose hands the temporal power was committed, were not only liable to the error of underrating, through ignorance and want of spiritual discernment, the importance of the questions at issue, but were often provoked to an excessive exercise of their authority by the spirit and temper in which the advocacy of the truth, the assertion of the power inherent in the ordinance of Christ, was conducted. To uphold order and peace in the social body, to prevent its being disturbed by collisions between antagonistic interests, principles, and tendencies, was the highest aim

which the temporal power proposed to itself ; and exasperation against the spiritual power was not unnatural, when the former found itself obstructed in the pursuit of this aim—not only legitimate but commendable in itself—by contentions which, while involving, perhaps, the most vital principles of the Faith, were apt to assume, in the eyes of the uninitiated, the superficial outside observer, the appearance of mere “questions and strifes of words.” On both sides it was too commonly forgotten that the peace of the Kingdom of God is an inward, not an outward peace ; that the only foundation of real peace is agreement in the Faith, to be attained, not by coercion but by persuasion ; that peace on any other foundation is fallacious, a semblance of peace where there is no peace ; and that, to guard against this very mistake, He who is the Prince of Peace warned His followers that He was come, “not to give peace on earth, but rather division.”¹

A cursory glance over the history of the Church from the time when the temporal power became friendly to her, and an alliance was formed between Church and State, will suffice to illustrate the foregoing remarks. The first step towards the recognition of the spiritual kingdom of Christ by the mighty power which, at that period, held the whole civilized world in subjection, was the publication of the Edict of Milan, which proclaimed the principle of neutrality on the part of the State in matters of religion, or, in other words, freedom of belief and worship. With two emperors sharers of the supreme power of the State, one an adherent of Christianity, the other a partisan of paganism, no other course was possible. But this state of neutrality was a mere transition state. The death of the protector of paganism left the supreme power in exclusively Christian hands. Being no longer persecuted, but enjoying, on the contrary, the countenance of those in power, the new faith, which had already, notwithstanding all the efforts of its enemies to crush it, succeeded in making its way among all classes of society, spread with increased rapidity, and soon became the religion of the majority, the dominant belief. To take account of the Church, to exercise an oversight over her, to regulate her affairs and settle her disputes, became henceforth a not unimportant part of Imperial solicitude and State policy.

To a great extent this change, auguring so favourably for the future of the Church, was due to the personal feelings of Constantine,² who

¹ Luke xii. 51.

² It is a singular fact, and goes far to account for much of the inconsistency of his conduct towards the Church, that whilst giving to his State policy a decidedly Christian character, Constantine held himself aloof from the communion of the Church. Officially, as emperor, he was a Christian ; personally, as a man, he continued an unbaptized catechumen until the hand of death was upon him.

had adopted the Cross as the symbol of Imperial power, and identified with its adoption the military successes which placed him in the proud position of sole ruler of the world. But it can hardly be doubted that political considerations had a share in the reversal of the Imperial policy towards the Church. The progress made by the Christian faith in the very teeth of persecution, the contempt and neglect into which the heathen worship had fallen, especially among the intelligent and educated classes, must, even to a monarch less prepossessed in its favour, have suggested the expediency of coming to terms with that unseen spiritual power whose conquests were as mysterious as they were undeniable. To leave a large and constantly increasing number of his subjects destitute of the security to life and property guaranteed by the civil government—to debar them from the enjoyment of their civil and political rights, and at the same time to deprive himself of the services of the best informed and most capable among them—was a policy which, irrespectively of all personal convictions, no ruler possessing, as Constantine did, the mind of a statesman, could possibly think of pursuing.

To go beyond this, to enact the part of ruler in the Church, as well as in the State, to make use of the Church and her officers as instruments of government, does not appear to have formed any part of Constantine's original design. Into all this he was drawn by the force of circumstances; and it is but fair to state that the Church herself had fully as large a share as the Emperor in the responsibility of bringing about the interference of the civil power with her internal affairs. That interference, though often arbitrarily exercised afterwards, was not, in the first instance, obtruded upon the Church; it was invited by her. The occasion of this step being taken was the Donatist schism in the African Church. The schismatical portion of that Church appealed to the Emperor in its quarrel against Cæcilian of Carthage, a proceeding for which those sectarians were severely condemned by the orthodox party. It should be remembered, however, that the orthodox themselves had set the example of invoking the Imperial authority at a time when it was pagan, in the case of Paul of Samosata, and that an appeal to Cæsar was not without Apostolic precedent.

Following the example of his pagan predecessors, Constantine referred the Donatist quarrel to an assembly of Bishops of his own selection convened at Rome; and when the Donatists refused to abide by their decision, on the plea of the smallness of their number, he summoned a Council from all parts of the Western Empire, to meet at Arles. This Council was both the most numerous that had yet

assembled, and the first Council convened by Imperial authority; with its deliberations, however, the Emperor did not interfere; it was presided over, after the example of the first Apostolic Synod at Jerusalem, by the Bishop within whose jurisdiction it was assembled. The sentence of the Council being again adverse to the Donatists, they appealed from the Council to the Emperor's personal decision after a fresh hearing of the cause, which, on their entreaty, he accorded to them. The appellants gained nothing by this step, as the Emperor not only decided in conformity with the finding of the Synods of Rome and Arles, but followed up his judgment by penal measures, the seizure of their churches, banishment, and confiscation; but, to the lasting injury of the Church, it involved the establishment of two evil precedents—that of taking an ecclesiastical cause out of the hands of the ecclesiastical judges to whom, by the ancient Canons, the trial of it belonged, and referring it to a lay tribunal exercising a supreme appellate jurisdiction; and that of enacting civil penalties by way of punishment for spiritual offences.

The next occasion on which the Imperial authority was brought into play arose out of a controversy far more important than the purely local schism of the Donatists—a controversy which touched the very foundations of the Christian faith, and affected all the Churches of Christendom in common. This time it would appear that the initiative of Imperial interference was—not improbably under the influence of a Bishop who favoured the heretical party—taken by the Emperor himself, whose attention had been attracted by the disturbance which the controversy had caused throughout the Church. The form which the Imperial interference assumed in the first instance was that of mediation. With this view, the Emperor addressed to the Patriarch of Alexandria and his excommunicated presbyter, Arius, a joint letter, exhorting them to peace and unity. The missive was entrusted to Hosius, Bishop of Corduba, who was charged to compose the differences which had arisen. He not only failed in effecting a reconciliation, but his report of the result of his mission produced in the mind of Constantine a conviction of the extreme gravity of the question raised by the heretical Alexandrian presbyter. So strong was this conviction, that he proceeded to convene a Council of Bishops from all parts of the empire—the first great Ecumenical Council—at Nicæa, in Bithynia, with the avowed purpose of obtaining the decision of the Church on the point in dispute, through the voice of her Bishops; which, after the decision of the Council, he declared to be “the mind of God, manifested through the Holy Ghost in their minds.”

From this assembly, besides the vindication of the truth on a

fundamental point of doctrine, in the form of a definite creed, and the regulation of divers matters of Church government and discipline brought under the consideration of the Council, two important results followed; on the one hand, the most explicit recognition of the authority of the universal Episcopate to decide controversies of faith; on the other hand, the recognition of an Imperial authority not only to convene Synods, but to regulate their proceedings, to promulgate their decrees, and to enforce them by civil penalties.

It was an obvious consequence of the acquiescence of the Church in these assumptions of an Imperial supremacy over her, that the exercise of that power which had, in the first instance, been used in support of the truth and of legitimate Church order, was liable to be abused in opposition to the truth, and to the subversion of the spiritual authority set to rule over the Church. The power of decreeing deposition and banishment against the fautors of heresy might be turned, and as a matter of fact was turned, against the maintainers of orthodoxy. The successor of the Bishop whose excommunication of Arius had brought the controversy to an issue, in the Patriarchal See of Alexandria, was called upon, under threats of deposition and banishment, to restore Arius to the communion of the Church, and thereby virtually to annul the decree of the Nicene Council. His refusal to do so stamped him in the Emperor's mind as a troubler of the Church's peace. A Synod convened by Imperial authority pronounced his condemnation, and its sentence was enforced by the deposition and banishment of the obnoxious Patriarch. Within ten years after the Nicene Council, the heresy condemned by the all-but unanimous verdict of the Bishops and Churches of Christendom was triumphant: another period of ten years witnessed the restoration of Athanasius, his second deposition and second restoration; and this was followed, within the next ten years, by his third deposition and forcible expulsion from his see. Such were, under the reign of Constantine, the first Christian Emperor, and of his three sons and joint successors, the immediate fruits of the establishment of an Imperial supremacy over the Church. Successive Synods, convened in the interest and at the instigation of whichever side happened to gain the Imperial ear, or to enjoy the favour of the Court, reversed each other's decrees, and presented the Church of Christ in the painful aspect of a house divided against itself. The accession of Julian, whose repudiation of Christianity may be accounted for by this state of the Christian Church no less than by the injudicious character of his education, put an end, for a time, to the Imperial supremacy; and Christianity, discountenanced and barely tolerated by the once more pagan ruler, reverted to its original position. A sense

of common danger moderated the heat of party strife, and the conciliatory conduct of Athanasius—who returned to his post at Alexandria, in the occupation of which he continued, with one brief interruption, to the day of his death—paved the way for the gradual restoration of unity of faith, and the general reception of the definitions of the Nicene Council. The reign of the pagan Julian was of brief duration; and the division of the empire into East and West, which took place after the death of Jovian, his short-lived successor, diminished the weight of the Imperial supremacy. For a time, through the favour of Valens, the Emperor of the East, Arianism still held its ground, not without difficulty, against the victorious power of truth. But when Theodosius the Great convened the Bishops of the East in the Second Great Council at Constantinople, its decision, subsequently adopted by the Churches of the West, and thereby stamped with Œcumenical authority, was in favour of the determinations of the Nicene Council, whose creed the assembled Bishops supplemented by additional definitions, in vindication of the truth against heresies of later date.

Other struggles were, and, we may well believe, still are, in store for the Church; none, with the exception possibly of that upon which the Church appears to be entering at this time against rationalistic unbelief, equally important, as regards the groundwork of the Christian Faith. That having been, once for all, secured by the establishment of the definitions of the two Councils of Nicæa and Constantinople, as the universal and unvarying standard of the Church's doctrine, subsequent attempts to revive the errors of Arianism met with little encouragement or success. The restlessness of the human mind, and its inherent recalcitrance against authority, gave rise to fresh speculations and misconceptions of the truth. Heresies continued to spring up in successive ages of the Church, as weeds make their appearance with the regular crop from season to season. To suppress their growth, and, as far as possible, to eradicate them, continued to be one of the chief duties of that Episcopate to whom the work of the Church and the guardianship of the Faith is committed.

Besides the conflicts inevitably arising out of the discharge of this duty, additional causes of discord were imported into the Church by her alliance with the secular power. Her posts of authority, which, under the sole supremacy of Christ, had conferred none but spiritual dignity, and had often proved posts of danger, were, through the intervention of the Imperial supremacy, converted into posts of worldly eminence and emolument, and became objects of desire to men of ambitious and covetous minds. The fraternal character of the Episcopate disappeared more and more under the blighting influence of official

subordination. Jealousies and rivalries between the more important sees, and especially between the great Patriarchates, were, not less frequently than errors of doctrine or breaches of discipline, the occasions of the peace of the Church being disturbed. Imputations of heterodoxy were often resorted to, as convenient weapons of ecclesiastical warfare ; and contentions, ostensibly for the Faith, arose from far other motives, and were made to subserve far other purposes, than the love of the truth or its maintenance.

Upon all these occasions—whether the conflict turned upon questions of doctrine, upon points of ecclesiastical order and procedure, or upon matters of personal belief and conduct—the Imperial supremacy was ever ready to intervene, and was constantly appealed to. Bishops, Metropolitans, Patriarchs, exercised their respective jurisdictions in and by their Synods, and delinquent or obnoxious Patriarchs found accusers and judges in their brother Patriarchs. But their spiritual authority was for the most part exercised in subordination to the temporal power, which claimed their allegiance, and, if necessary, enforced their submission. In cases intrinsically important, or rendered such by the turbulence or obstinacy of the contending parties, the Imperial will had to be consulted. The favour of the Court and of high officers of State had to be propitiated in order to give effect to the exercise of spiritual rule. Bribery and flattery were means of upholding the authority wielded in the name of Christ, to which the rulers of His Church and champions of His truth were expected, and in many instances—among which that of Cyril of Alexandria stands conspicuous—disdained not, to have recourse. The trial of ecclesiastical causes remained, certainly, in the hands of Councils ; but it was the Imperial edict embodying their decisions that gave them legal force. Moreover, the initiative in convening Councils, or Commissions of Bishops specially selected for the trial of particular cases, was often taken by the civil power, and the selection of the judges not uncommonly made with a direct view to the sentence required. Larger Councils called for by the wide prevalence of disorders in the Church were invariably convened by Imperial summons, and their proceedings regulated by Imperial lay Commissioners, while, as a matter of form, Bishops occupied the presidential chair. All this was so clearly understood, and so generally submitted to—to protest against it would have been *primâ facie* so perilous to the party protesting—that the orthodox and the heterodox alike acquiesced in the system ; and even direct appeals to the Emperor for trial by lay tribunals against synodical decisions are not without example.

Nor was the interference of the Imperial supremacy confined to

questions of jurisdiction. In the appointment of Bishops, especially to the patriarchal and other important sees, the Court generally exercised an indirect, and the Emperor sometimes a direct influence. Not unfrequently the choice fell upon men of unsound views ; this being in fact, one of the chief causes of the scandals and disputes occasioned by heresies in which men of the highest ecclesiastical rank were involved. Ordinations and consecrations took place in obedience to the civil power ; a notable instance of which is the consecration of St. Chrysostom to the see of Constantinople by the Patriarch of Alexandria, under coercion, by menaces, from the eunuch Eutropius. Persons excommunicated by formal decrees of the Councils were forced upon the communion of the Church and were reinstated in ecclesiastical offices by Imperial mandate. Churches were taken from the orthodox and handed over to heretical Bishops, and, *vice versâ*, heterodox Bishops were expelled from their churches and appropriated to orthodox worship. Deposition, confiscation, banishment, was the lot of Bishops who refused compliance. Whether these measures were in favour of the truth or against it, depended entirely on the chance of orthodoxy or heterodoxy being in the ascendant in the Imperial palace.

Occasionally, it is true, eminent men in high places withstood the encroachments of the Imperial power ; but they were not always successful in their resistance. St. Ambrose compelled the great Theodosius to take his place in the church among the laity, and put him to open penance for a public crime. But like boldness in refusing one of his churches for Arian worship, and in rebuking the vices and follies of the Court, cost St. Chrysostom his see, and caused him to end his days in banishment. Considering how rarely it happened that the worthiest men were raised to the episcopate, and how many reached the most exalted ranks through the operation of unworthy motives, it is scarcely to be wondered at that Christian firmness and faithfulness should have proved the exception, and servility the rule. So afflicting, so sad, and so humiliating were the fruits of the supremacy of the temporal power in the Roman Empire,—in the East lowering the episcopate until it was ready at last to bend its neck under the yoke of a Mahometan master ; while in the West the growing feebleness of Imperial power paved the way for the rise of another supremacy, yet more inimical to the supremacy of Christ.

Before bringing this part of the present inquiry to a close, a few remarks seem to be called for as to the working of the Royal supremacy in that branch of the Church, lying out of reach of the Imperial supremacy, in which the supremacy question is being agitated anew under circumstances of the deepest interest to the maintenance

of the Catholic Faith. As far as obscure legends, reaching up to the remotest ages, furnish any ground for forming an opinion on the subject, it would appear that from the first introduction of Christianity into these islands the Church was identified with the political and social institutions of the people, that she never existed otherwise than in connexion with the State. How in British times the spiritual and the temporal powers stood related to each other, there are no certain means of knowing. That the Anglo-Saxon Church was a State Church from the date of St. Augustine's mission is certain, as her Synods had, for the most part, the character of national assemblies for deliberation and legislation in matters both of Church and State. The Royal power exercised considerable control over the affairs of the Church, whose laws, though framed by the advice and with the concurrence of ecclesiastics, were promulgated and made binding by Royal authority. Making allowance for the contrast presented by the more advanced civilization of Rome, and the greater magnitude of the forces brought into play in an empire which embraced the whole of the civilized and nearly the whole of the known world, as compared with the simpler state of an insulated people gradually emerging from barbarism, the Royal supremacy as exercised in England will be found to have stood towards the Church in a relation not very dissimilar to that of the Imperial supremacy towards the Churches of the Eastern world. The action was more harmonious, both the causes of disturbance and the temptations to mutual encroachment being less. But the principle was the same. The temporal power took the Church under its rule and protection, and the bearers of the spiritual authority consented to act in submission to the law of the State and the will of the sovereign.

On reviewing¹ the struggles which inaugurated the rise of the Imperial supremacy, and, those which afterwards took place in the course of the development of the relations between Church and State, both in these islands and on the wider field of the Roman Empire, the lesson conveyed by the history of the Church while placed under the control of the temporal power suggests that word of holy prophecy: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord." That through

¹ The necessary limits of the present inquiry preclude a minute reference to historical facts and sources. Those conversant with ecclesiastical history will recognise the picture here drawn in general outline. Those who wish for more detailed information will readily find it in any of the standard works on Ecclesiastical History. Among these the Rev. J. C. Robertson's "*History of the Christian Church*" will prove specially useful to English readers; and a critical analysis of the transactions briefly epitomised in these pages will be found, together with copious references, in the treatise published by the author of these pages, under the title, "*The Royal Supremacy over the Church, considered as to its origin and its constitutional limits.*"

the mass of human infirmity and corruption, amidst the strife of conflicting errors and contending passions, the Truth and Ordinance of Christ were preserved in their integrity, was assuredly not due to the support given to them by the secular arm. Its intervention habitually weakened, and often threatened to crush, both ; but against the most adverse influences, and the most destructive attempts they were invariably upheld by the invisible working of the secret inward power transmitted to successive generations of the Church by the Apostolic Episcopate, representing and exercising, through the Holy Ghost, as His Vicegerent, the Supremacy of Christ.

V.—THE PAPAL SUPREMACY.

IN the course of the conflicts which the Church had to maintain against the encroachments of Imperial power, the Patriarchate, originally no more than a pre-eminence of dignity, rose gradually into a position of substantial power. In the face of the Empire, and before the eyes of the world, the Church was represented by the four great Patriarchs of Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria. While the last three continued in subjection to the rulers of the Eastern Empire, whose progressive degradation they shared, the reverses which the Imperial power sustained in Italy, and which terminated in the total extinction of the Western Empire, freed the Roman Patriarch more and more from the pressure of the Imperial Supremacy. The transfer of the Imperial residence from Rome to Milan, and subsequently to Ravenna, left the authority of the Roman Patriarch without a rival and without a counterpoise. As the political prestige of the city of Rome declined, the ecclesiastical prestige of the Church of Rome, and of her Bishop, as Patriarch of the West, rose higher and higher. His comparative exemption from the interference of the civil power and the influence of court intrigues, to which the Eastern Patriarchs were exposed, enabled the Bishop of Rome, during the controversies by which the Church was distracted, to take up a more independent and more dignified position. Accordingly the occupant of the See of Rome was generally, though not invariably, on the side of orthodoxy. To have the concurrence of the Western Patriarch was felt by his colleagues in the East to be no small advantage ; to refer questions in dispute to the Bishop of Rome, as the most independent and impartial ecclesiastical authority, was a

practice frequently resorted to, not only by the contending parties in other Churches, but by the Imperial power itself, when unbiassed by party influence or by purposes of its own.

While the Roman Patriarch thus profited largely by the depression of his brother Patriarchs, he took his full share of the increase of power which had accrued to the Patriarchate generally from the extensive powers of jurisdiction over both Bishops and Metropolitans conferred upon it by Church legislation under Imperial auspices. The original theory of the Episcopate as a joint trust for the exercise of the Supremacy of Christ was not, indeed, forgotten, but in practice was lost sight of more and more. A valuable testimony to it was borne by a Bishop of Rome who, within the limits of his own Patriarchate, was a strenuous assertor of the authority of his office, and who, by the weight of his character and learning, exercised considerable influence over the Church of his own age. When, under the reign of the Emperor Mauricius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, presuming upon the position of his see in what had now become the sole capital of the Empire, arrogated to himself the title of "Œcumenical" or "Universal" Bishop, Gregory the Great, who then occupied the Roman chair, protested against it in the most energetic terms, denouncing it as a "name of blasphemy," and a "note of anti-Christ." He would neither consent to its being given to others, nor would he accept it for himself; and in remonstrating against it he dwelt most strongly on this very point, that to designate as "Universal" any one Bishop or Patriarch, was virtually to nullify and to degrade, not only the whole Patriarchate, but the universal Episcopate and Priesthood.¹

It seems incredible that, in the face of such arguments and denunciations as these, any of the successors of Gregory the Great should have assumed the very title which he so vigorously opposed and so earnestly repudiated; still more so that they should have asserted—and that in a sense far more stringent than that associated with the title "Œcumenical Bishop" by the Orientals—the existence of such a universal supremacy, from the Apostolic age downwards, during a period of more than five hundred years before the time when Gregory pronounced it incompatible with the Apostolic institution of the Episcopate. Such a pretension was impossible without a bold falsification of history, in an age of literary as well as ecclesiastical ignorance and darkness. And such a falsification of history was actually perpetrated about the middle of the ninth century, in the shape of a compilation of forged

¹ See the Epistles of St. Gregory the Great, *passim*.

documents, purporting to be Papal rescripts or decretals, reaching up to the first successors of the Apostles. Concerning the author of this forgery, and the personal motives that prompted it, we must rest content with conjecture ; while the fraudulent character of the production is so clearly demonstrable, that it has been openly acknowledged by candid writers of the Papal communion.

The groundwork on which the forgery was based was an earlier compilation of the Canons of the Primitive Church and of the more important Councils, to which had been appended a collection of rescripts from some of the later Bishops of Rome—the earliest of them dating no further back than the close of the fifth century—which contained their *dicta* on certain points referred to them from time to time. These two collections together had come into general use in the West, as a kind of manual of Ecclesiastical law ; the first compiler of them being a Roman monk, Dionysius Exiguus, about the middle of the sixth century. Early in the following century the joint collections were reproduced, with the addition of a number of Canons from the acts of African, Gallican, and Spanish Councils, and of some Papal rescripts of later date, by Isidore, Bishop of Seville, whose learning, considerable for his age, caused his name to be held in high repute. It was the name of this Isidore, and the collection which bore his name, that were made use of two hundred years later, to give currency and credit to the forgery of the “ False Decretals,” substituted for the genuine work of Isidore of Seville. Though clumsily executed, nor altogether unquestioned at the time, this monstrous forgery was, soon after its appearance, endorsed by the authority of the Roman See ; Pope Nicholas I. quoting it in his disputes with Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims, as an authentic text-book of Church law, either believing, or affecting to believe, it the genuine work of the celebrated Bishop of Seville. And later still, when, in the middle of the twelfth century, a regular digest of Canon law was, under Papal auspices, prepared by Gratian, the false decretals formed the basis of this digest, which, to this day, under the name of “ *Decretum Gratiani*,” constitutes the main portion of the “ *Corpus Juris Canonici*.”

That so deliberate an imposture—the manufacture, in fact, of five centuries of history which never happened, by the fabrication of documents, having reference to a state of things and to institutions which, as therein represented, never had any existence—should have been attempted, is most astounding ; that it should have been successful to such a degree as permanently to stamp its character upon the constitution of the Church, is still more marvellous. Strange, however, and almost incredible though it appears, both its origin and its success

may be accounted for by the circumstances of the times in which it was ushered into the world. The Patriarchal See of Rome had long had greatness thrust upon it. Amidst the changes which convulsed Western Europe, the See of Rome had exhibited the only type of stability. Considerable property had been acquired from time to time by the Bishops of Rome, which made their See one of the wealthiest, if not the wealthiest, in all Christendom. Those possessions had not only been largely augmented, but from mere property had been converted into a species of temporal sovereignty in the course of the transactions which, with the sanction of the Pope solicited by Pepin, transferred the kingdom of the Franks from the Merovingian to the Carolingian dynasty, and, in the person of Charlemagne, raised up anew the Imperial dignity in the West. The restoration of the Roman Empire naturally suggested the possibility, if not probability, of a dependence of the Patriarch of Rome on the Emperor of Rome, similar to that of the Patriarch of Constantinople on the Emperor of Constantinople; a prospect which the past experience of the practical working of the Imperial Supremacy showed to be fraught with danger to the authority of the Church and to the best interests of religion. To have guarded against such a contingency by a discussion of the principles on which the relations between Church and State ought to be regulated would have been alike useless and ineffectual; useless, because the subtleties of political and theological science would have been ill suited to the rude intellects with whom the question must have been argued; ineffectual, because the age was one in which might was accepted as the most conclusive evidence of right. A much shorter and more effectual way to set limits to the interference of Imperial power with the affairs of the Church was to impress the minds of the new rulers of the West with the prestige of ancient authority vested in the Roman Patriarch as head of the Western Church. With this view, the very donation of Charlemagne to the Roman See had been deprived of the character of novelty attaching to it, by the invention of a precedent, in the shape of a similar donation, alleged, without a shadow of historical truth, to have been made to the See of Rome by the first Christian Emperor. Nothing could be more serviceable to the Church than that documentary evidence should be forthcoming of the supreme authority of the Bishop of Rome, as successor of St. Peter, in all Ecclesiastical matters; and, as no such evidence was in existence, the obvious expedient, in an age not very scrupulous as to matters of fact, was to manufacture it. A new edition of the existing standard of Ecclesiastical law, with such emendations and interpolations as were best calculated to effect the object in view, was, in a manner, called

for by the exigency of the times;¹ and, on the unfailing principle of demand and supply, Isidore was reproduced in a garb in which the learned and accurate Bishop of Seville would have found it difficult to recognise himself. Thus, as a matter of history, it is an undeniable fact—however the plain statement of it may grate upon the ear—that the foundations of both the temporal sovereignty of the Pope and his spiritual supremacy were laid in falsehood and in fraud.

Such a career, once entered upon, admits of no repentance and no retreat. The liar and the forger once fairly entangled in the network of his own iniquity, is drawn on irresistibly to have recourse to fresh artifices, and to put forward fresh pretences, for the maintenance of a position destitute of all real foundation. So it happened to the Papacy. The individual entangled in the system, promoted to be its representative, had no control over his own course of action. Whatever his personal conviction or disposition might be, he had no option but to march on in the course entered upon by his predecessors, and so to perpetuate the policy which had made him what he was. The "mystery of iniquity" continued, and to this day it continues, to "work," recoiling upon those who yield themselves as instruments to the working of it with the terrible moral retribution of "a strong delusion," to "believe" the very "lie" which the Papacy has made, and stands self-condemned to carry on, and to persist in, to the end. To cease to make—to confess and to abandon—that lie, would, on the part of the Papacy, be a suicidal act. There is more truth than the world gives it credit for, truth more awful than itself suspects, in the famous plea, "*Non possumus.*"

Of opportunities for the full development and practical application of the theory propounded in the False Decretals there was no lack. In Western Christendom no exercise of ecclesiastical jurisdiction was possible without consolidating the pretended power of the Pope as Universal Bishop. If the cases which arose from time to time were

¹ A curious illustration of the unscrupulous character of the measures resorted to by the Churchmen of that period in their dealings with the rude warriors of the age, is the letter addressed to Pepin by Pope Stephen II., after several appeals made in his own name had proved ineffectual, in the name and person of St. Peter, in which that Apostle, fortifying his pleas by the joint entreaties of the Virgin Mary, is made to invoke the assistance of the Frankish king against the Lombard invaders of his, the Apostle's, patrimony. How thoroughly the king of the Franks entered into the spirit of this—bold fiction, shall we call it?—appears from the fact that he refused to retain any of the possessions which on that occasion he wrested from the Lombards, but presented them to the Roman See, assigning as his reason that he had "conquered them for the Apostle." With minds trained under a different ethical standard, and living in a critical age, we may find it difficult to appreciate such a transaction as this; nevertheless it may serve to explain other phenomena of the same kind which appear to us equally unintelligible, because irreconcilable with the commonest notions of what is right and true.

dealt with by Metropolitan Councils, in professed accordance with the principles of the constitution improvised for the Church by the author of the False Decretals, they formed so many links in an ever-lengthening chain of evidence, in confirmation of those principles. If at any time an attempt was made to proceed on the true principles of the Church's original constitution, to vindicate the independence of the ancient jurisdictions, an appeal to the Pope—or, as it often happened, the interference of the Pope *proprio motu*—afforded an opportunity for the assertion of the supreme and universal jurisdiction claimed for the Pope. The intrinsic merits of the cause were lost sight of in the correction of the grave offence of claiming and exercising an independent jurisdiction. The most correct and righteous judgments were—as happened in the very age in which the False Decretals first saw the light, in the course of the conflicts between the Papacy and Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims—reversed upon the simple ground that the latter had put himself in the wrong by exercising his jurisdiction independently of the Pope. As for the Eastern Patriarchates, they had neither the inclination nor the power to interfere with the growth of this monstrous usurpation in the West. They were preoccupied with their own internal affairs and mutual relations under Imperial control; and, as a rule, their very existence was loftily ignored by the Papacy, from which they had become alienated, not only by ancient rivalries, but by serious doctrinal disagreements. Attempts to accommodate the differences between Eastern and Western Christendom, were, on the part of the Papacy, always clogged by the assumption of its supreme and universal jurisdiction, and the refusal of the Eastern Churches to acknowledge this claim, became an additional ground of alienation; thus causing the breach to be widened by every attempt to heal it, until it became confessedly irremediable.

The Papal usurpation, however, was not confined to the crushing of every independent ecclesiastical authority. It soon began to extend further, by the assumption of a right of interference with the temporal power. To this, likewise, the circumstances of the times were remarkably favourable. The empire raised by Charlemagne did not survive that able and energetic monarch. Its division into separate kingdoms, the rivalries and contests between these, and not unfrequently the personal conduct of those who bore rule over them, furnished abundant opportunities for the Papacy to intervene, either on appeal or *proprio motu*, on the plea of a general guardianship of morality and public right, for the regulation of princely households, the correction of princely excesses, the adjustment of political differences, and the settlement of international disputes. Any attempt to resist the en-

encroachments of the Papal power, to vindicate the rights of sovereigns or the independence of nations, was resented as an act of rebellion against the sovereignty of Christ, the sole exponent and interpreter of whose will the Papacy professed to be; and was visited, in the case of nations, by the intolerable suspension of the ministrations of religion, and, in the case of sovereigns, by excommunication, by sentences of deposition, absolving their subjects from their allegiance, and sanctioning the invasion and conquest of their dominions by brother monarchs, whom their ambition tempted to make themselves the instruments of Papal tyranny. Nor did the Papacy stop there. Acts of declared hostility, schemes of open aggression, were supplemented by secret plots and conspiracies. Individual assassinations and wholesale massacres, planned and executed in the interest of the Papacy, and by its minions, showed that the doctrines of the lawfulness of regicide and murder, when employed in the service of the Papacy, and, as was blasphemously alleged, "for the greater glory of God," propounded by the accredited doctors of the Roman Church, were more than mere theories—that they were stern realities, forming part of the Papal system. The triumphal commemoration of butcheries which make humanity shudder, the canonization of conspirators and assassins, fix upon the Papacy the indelible stain of the foulest and most horrible crimes committed in furtherance of its policy, and for the maintenance of its usurped authority.

But even this did not satisfy the cravings of Papal ambition and lust of power. To exercise an unlimited and irresponsible jurisdiction over all the Churches of Christendom—casting out as heretics all that refused to submit to it—and an equally unlimited and irresponsible power over all the kingdoms of the world, was, in the eyes of the Papacy, too little. It must needs stretch its dominion, based on falsehood and fraud, beyond the limits of the visible into the regions of the unseen world. In the place of that "Church of the Firstborn whose names are written in heaven," of whose existence Holy Scripture testifies, and into whose ranks the charity and piety of the early Church believed all her members to have passed who had "fallen asleep in Jesus," the Papacy substituted a fabled hierarchy of mediators of its own creation, through whom Christ, the only true Mediator, was to be approached, with the Mother of the Godman at its head. To this host of intercessors the Papacy arrogated to itself the exclusive power of adding from time to time the names of such as had, while here on earth, devoted themselves to the cause of the Papacy "in a heroic degree." All the rest, the great body of the faithful departed, the Papacy consigned to a fabulous region of the

unseen world—another of its lying impostures—to be purified, not by “the blood of Christ” which “cleanseth from all sin,” but by fiery torments, the duration of which the Papacy pretended to have under its control, and offered to abridge in consideration of money payments for mortuary masses and indulgences ; thus, in effect, setting aside the propitiatory character and the atoning virtue of Christ’s death, and making merchandise of the salvation of souls.

The maintenance of the doctrine of Christ in Apostolic purity was, in combination with such a stupendous edifice of spiritual fraud, a moral impossibility. The faith, no less than the history, of the Church had to be falsified ; and to effect this the very domain of eternal Truth itself had to be made subject to the same Papal supremacy. The pretension of Papal infallibility did for the doctrine of the Church what the False Decretals had done for her government. Henceforth to differ from the teaching of Rome was to be in deadly error ; the only safe way of truth was to accept the doctrinal decrees and definitions of the Papacy—no matter how manifestly irreconcilable with the plainest declarations of the inspired Word of God, and the most authentic and authoritative testimonies of Christian antiquity. “*Roma locuta est, finita est causa,*” became the rule and the sum of all Christian belief. In the strictest sense of the words the Pope became, in the eyes of the Churches led captive by this delusion, what by Christ’s appointment the Holy Ghost is—the guide into all truth throughout all ages ; and consistently with the setting up of this claim to His office and authority, the Pope assumed the very title “*Vicarius Christi,*” given by the early Church to the Third Person of the Ever-blessed Trinity. The Bishop of Rome blasphemously set himself forth to the Church and the whole world as the duly constituted “Vicar of Christ.”

That a structure of a character so antagonistic to that of the Church founded by Christ Himself should endure, was not to be expected. The supremacy of Christ, wholly superseded in the Papal theory by the supremacy of him who called himself His vicegerent on earth, and who claimed to exercise by anticipation His supreme power in the unseen world, asserted itself in the hearts and minds of men by the secret operation of the Holy Ghost, Christ’s true Vicegerent. The false doctrines promulgated by the Papacy, the superstitious practices introduced in connexion with them, came to be regarded with doubt and suspicion ; and when the revival of literature and the invention of the art of printing afforded increasing facilities of research into the foundations of Christ’s truth, the tenor of the written Word of God, and the belief of the primitive ages, the whole fabric of Papal imposture was shaken to its base.

While thus in the Western part of Christendom, arrogantly proclaimed by the Papacy, to the exclusion of the Eastern Churches, as "the Catholic Church," a general revulsion of feeling and of belief was silently preparing in the heart of the Church, the attitude assumed by the Papacy towards the temporal powers tended to provoke resistance and reiterated attacks upon the outer framework of Papal domination. The assumptions upon which it was founded came to be questioned, and could, no more than the doctrinal system of Rome, abide the test of Scriptural criticism and of historical inquiry. The crisis was accelerated by the vices and corruptions of the Papal Court. The methods by which men—nay, very boys—were raised to the Papacy—the notorious employment for that purpose of bribery, of fraud, and force—and, still more, the pride, the rapacity, and the personal profligacy exhibited by many of the occupants of "St. Peter's Chair," rendered it more and more impossible to believe that men raised to that pinnacle of superhuman power by such wicked means, and abusing that power for such vile ends, could be, as they pretended to be, the viceregents and representatives of the King of Truth and Righteousness. And when, at last, there supervened the scandal of anti-popes contending against each other for the possession of that supreme power—when these rival claimants, and the councils called by them, came to hurl against one another the frightful anathemas the terror of which had kept nations and their kings in awe, the weapons of what the Papacy termed "spiritual warfare" became blunted and unserviceable. The Vatican might still, from time to time, send forth its thunders; the Bull *In Cæna Domini*, that "chiefest and firmest pillar" of the Papal supremacy, universally binding, according to its own tenor, not only upon all Christendom, but upon the whole world, and consigning to eternal damnation all that refuse to bend the neck under the Papal yoke, might still be affixed from year to year to the gates of St. John of Lateran; but the prestige that had once attached to these demonstrations of Pontifical wrath was gone; the Papal anathema had in the general estimation of mankind sunk down to the level of a *brutum fulmen*. The flames kindled by the Holy Inquisition might consume the bodies of revolters against the usurped supremacy of the Pope, but they could not extinguish the rising spirit of a truer and a purer faith. Having with difficulty survived the condemnation pronounced against it by two General Councils of Western Christendom, and evaded the recurrence of a similar danger by the machinations of the partisan Council of Trent, in answer to the unanimous cry of Western Christendom for Reformation in the Church, the Papacy has succeeded in maintaining its ground within its own territorial domain, and in re-

taining its hold, tenaciously rather than firmly, feebly rather than powerfully, on those portions of Western Christendom in which the belief in the spiritual supremacy of the Bishop of Rome as "successor of St. Peter," is still lingering. But even this partial "healing of its wound" has been purchased at the fearful cost of multiplied schisms all over the Western Patriarchate, and the consequent isolation of the Papacy, reduced to a mere shadow of its former self. *De facto* the Pope has ceased to be, even within the original limits of his Patriarchal authority, what *de jure* he never was, the Universal Bishop and Supreme Governor of all Christendom.

What new aspects of Church government, what claims to the reversion of the supremacy forfeited by the Pope, arose out of the consolidation of the remnant of Papal power by the decrees of the Council of Trent, will form the subject of the concluding chapter of the present inquiry. Meanwhile it is instructive to note the fact that not only has the theory on which the Papal supremacy was based been found wanting as a corrective of the evils entailed upon the Church by the Imperial supremacy; it has infinitely aggravated those evils, whether regard be had to the maintenance of the faith, or the preservation of the unity of the Church. Both have suffered more grievous injury than from any other cause, from the experiment—by this time an undeniable failure—of bringing the whole Christian Church under the universal sway of one visible head, claiming—in opposition to Christ's own declaration that now, during this present dispensation, His kingdom is not of this world—to exercise universal dominion over all the Churches and kingdoms of the world in the character of the Vicegerent of Christ. The failure of that experiment proclaims, more loudly than any other event in the history of the Church, the continued and effectual presence of Christ with His Church according to His promise, and the continued and effectual exercise of His own supremacy over her, in its true and original character of a purely spiritual supremacy.

VI.—THE POPULAR SUPREMACY.

WHEN the unholy fabric reared by Papal ambition was borne down by the weight of its own falsehood and corruption, the pretended unity of Christendom, of which the Papacy had held itself out to the world as the divinely-appointed centre, was broken up even within the limits of the Roman Patriarchate, where a semblance of it had been kept up, while the reality had been rendered impossible by schismatical separation from the Eastern Churches. The overthrow of the Papal authority in a large portion of Western Christendom, where alone it had succeeded in establishing itself, consigned that part of Christ's flock to a state of anarchy. The Episcopate, having been stripped of its legitimate authority, and reduced to a state of vassalage under the Papacy, had in a great measure lost the sense of its own dignity, as well as the consciousness of its inherent spiritual power, so long overlaid by a fraudulent usurpation. In the enfeebled and degraded condition to which it had sunk down, it was not prepared effectually to assert its claim to the government of the Church in the name and by the authority of Christ, amidst the confusion and turbulence incident to a general insurrection of the religious mind. Its Apostolic origin and character having been obscured, and all but effaced, in the eyes of men, who had been taught to regard it in the light of a deputy-popedom, it came in for a large share of the public execration aroused against the blasphemous pretensions of the self-styled Vicar of Christ.

The legitimate authority to which the government of the Church had been committed, being thus held in abeyance by its own weakness, no less than by the violent prejudice with which it was regarded, the task of reconstructing her internal organization, and setting in order the things that were wanting, devolved most naturally upon the civil power, as the only other authority to which men were accustomed to look up. But the civil power itself was greatly changed from what it had been when it was concentrated in the hands of the Emperor Constantine. It was now infinitesimally subdivided. Not only had great monarchs come to share the sovereign authority with a number of petty princes, but by the side of both a new form of civil power

had grown up through the development of municipal institutions. Western Christendom, formerly held together by a uniform religious system, with the Pope at its head, found itself, on the destruction of that system, split up into a large number of independent communities, each of which had, under the guidance of its civil rulers, to form for itself a religious organization, in the place of that which by common consent had been discarded. Accordingly the course which this "Reformation," aptly so called, took, varied in the different political communities according to the personal bias of kings, princes, and chief magistrates. The tempting spoil of the property which the Church had amassed gave an additional stimulus to the assertion of their supreme authority in matters of religion. In the place of what had once been the Church, a religious establishment was substituted, dependent altogether on secular legislation, and so fused with the other civil institutions, whether monarchical or republican, as to partake to a great extent of their character. In this process the divinely-appointed instrument for the exercise of Christ's supremacy over His Church was, in many instances, altogether set aside; and the foundations of what, by a misnomer, was still termed "the Church," were laid in human authority. The extent to which this principle, utterly subversive of the very idea of Christ's Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, has been carried, is curiously illustrated by the fact that, at the very rise of the "Reformation," the Kingdom of Christ was turned from a monarchy into a democracy, in a small Swiss republic; while, within the memory of the present generation, an Episcopate, so-called, has been created *de novo*, by Royal rescript, in the most absolutist kingdom of Germany.

The anarchical tendencies evoked by the Papal imposture did not, however, stop there. The right of the civil power to manufacture religious establishments, termed Churches, came very naturally to be questioned. It was soon discovered that Christianity, being in its nature spiritual, lay beyond the sphere of temporal government; and this discovery, laid hold of by the innate propensity of the human mind to resist the ordinance of God, and to do "every man as is right in his own eyes," gave birth to that marvellous perversion of religion, the "right of private judgment," asserted under the specious name of "liberty of conscience." The fact that true religion consists in believing the truth revealed by God, and submitting to the ordinances appointed by Him, was altogether lost sight of. Instead of being recognised as a heaven-devised system of faith and practice, sustained by the living presence of the Holy Ghost, Christianity came to be regarded as a mere matter of human opinion, leaving each man to believe what he

considers to be true, and to practise what he conceives to be conducive to his edification. The result has been the rise of a countless multitude of sects, amenable neither to the Episcopate, as the representation of Christ's supremacy, nor to the factitious supremacy of the civil power. While, according to this principle, each man is supreme in matters of faith, and free to enter with others, equally supreme, into such arrangements as may be agreed upon between them for carrying on any given system to which they see fit to give the name of Christianity, all the systems so propounded and propagated have this one characteristic in common, that from them those two fundamental principles of the religion taught and established by Christ, faith and obedience, are eliminated.

The growth of this religious individualism, and of the sectarianism to which in its gregarious aspect it gives rise, was greatly fostered, at the same time that its essentially irreligious character was disguised, by the wide dissemination of the Holy Scriptures, translated into the vernacular languages, and multiplied by the art of printing. To take the Word of God for the rule of faith and practice, was a principle unimpeachable in itself; but in applying that principle, men overlooked the very important distinction between the teaching of the Bible, and the often erroneous conclusions drawn from its contents by ignorant or half-informed readers, destitute of the Spirit of Christ. The Bible being put forth by the Church herself, and universally recognised, as the infallible source and standard of Divine Truth, it was too hastily assumed that every system of doctrine must be true, every system of Church government legitimate, in support of which its promoters and adherents were enabled to advance arguments from the Bible, satisfactory to their own minds. The idea of Catholic truth, based upon the authoritative interpretation of the Bible by the Church, as transmitted from the beginning through successive ages, was thrown into the background by new and often plausible interpretations to which their very novelty imparted an additional charm. That the leading minds who, in the chaotic state to which Western Christendom had been reduced, struck out new confessions of faith and new theories of the Church, did so with the best intentions and in all sincerity, may be readily admitted; nor can the Papacy ever stand absolved from its share of responsibility for the errors and mistakes into which many of the Reformers fell,—into which they may be said to have been almost driven by their well-founded and justifiable antagonism to Papal corruptions of the religion of Christ. At the same time no apologetic pleas for individuals can make that true which is intrinsically erroneous, or that right which is essentially

wrong. The broad fact, after all, remains, that public opinion, following the lead of individual minds, superseded the divinely-constituted authority of the Episcopate, and set up a novel kind of supremacy over the Church, which may most appropriately be designated as the "Popular Supremacy."

This extraordinary change was not, however, effected at once. It came in by degrees, almost imperceptibly; and its course varied considerably in different Churches. In some of them the maintenance of the Episcopal Order and form of ecclesiastical government greatly retarded its progress, by imposing a salutary check alike upon the arbitrary proceedings of the civil power and the ever-shifting tendencies of private judgment. Among the Churches in which the work of the "Reformation" was thus wisely tempered by the retention of the Episcopal element, the transmission of Apostolic power perpetuated, and the representation of Christ's supremacy maintained,—albeit subject to encroachments from the civil power as well as from the popular mind,—the Church of England has all along held a foremost rank; and as it is in her that the question of the supremacy has been raised afresh, the circumstances by which the peculiar course of her Reformation was determined, claim special attention.

In no other Church of Western Christendom had the Royal supremacy a stronger hold upon the Church, even in times when the Papal supremacy had reduced the civil power elsewhere to a state of absolute subjection. With one solitary exception,—which through the upheaving of national resistance was made to prove the rule,—the kings of England had been tenacious of the Royal Prerogative, and jealous of Papal interference. It was only by constituting the Archbishop of Canterbury his perpetual Legate that the Pope could manage to retain at least the semblance of his usurped spiritual authority in England, while his pretension to supremacy over the temporal power was, with the one exception before alluded to, uniformly resisted. The English Episcopate, likewise, in turns kept in check and supported by the Royal power, had maintained a position of greater independence towards the Papacy. As a natural consequence, the Episcopate had in England become a power in the State, and any change either in the doctrine or in the discipline of the Church was, without its concurrence, impossible. With her Episcopate placed on this political vantage ground, the English Church was, moreover, distinguished by the theological learning of not a few among her clergy, who were competent, not only to deal with questions turning on the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, but to trace out, historically, the character of

primitive Christianity, and to mould her Reformation upon the pattern of the Apostolic and post-Apostolic Churches.

So strong was the Church's position, that when the Royal power and the Papacy came to an open rupture, the most absolute and arbitrary of monarchs was content to assert his Royal supremacy over the Church with this important limitation, that while he ruled the temporality by the temporality, the spirituality should be ruled, though in the name of the king, yet in effect by the spirituality; thus restoring in England, at the period of the Reformation, the same kind of relation in which the Episcopate and the civil power stood to each other at the rise of the Imperial supremacy in the Roman Empire, and which in England was coeval with the very existence of the Church.

But the Royal power itself was destined to undergo important modifications. A democratic element, developing itself in the nation, rose up against the monarchy and the Church together, and for a time swept them both off the face of the land. The reaction which ensued, while it reinstated the Church in her former position, failed to restore the relation in which she had stood to the Royal power; so much so that the faithfulness of the Episcopate in defending the Church against the insidious machinations of the Papacy gave the first impulse to that course of events which ended in a forcible dynastic change. That change proved in more than one way injurious to the Church. Pledged by their coronation oath to her maintenance, those to whose hands the Royal power was transferred were, in heart, strangers to the Church, which received at their hands neither sympathy nor active support. Nevertheless the theory of the Royal supremacy was maintained; and in course of time the relations between the monarchy and the Church might have assumed a character more favourable to the latter, but for the constitutional changes which placed the exercise of the Royal supremacy virtually in the hands of the nominees of the popular will, who, whether from personal conviction or by the necessity of their official position, may be, and sometimes are, avowedly hostile to the Church, or, at best, prove themselves her lukewarm friends, so far,—but no farther,—as they conceive that the friendship of the Church will strengthen their hands.

The complaint made, not without abundant cause, of oppression by the Royal supremacy is thus evidently founded on a complete misapprehension. It is the Popular supremacy that, under the name and semblance of the Royal supremacy, is withholding from the Church her just rights, and subjecting her to the indignity of secular inter-

ference with her spiritual government. It is the Popular supremacy that in the colonies of England has constituted a form of government from which the Church, as a national institution, is excluded ; and by doing so has furnished conclusive, as well as highly instructive, evidence of the fact that the Royal supremacy has been removed into the category of legal fictions. It is the Popular supremacy that has, at home, created an anomalous tribunal, ostensibly for the protection of the Church, but virtually, and in its practical operation, for the protection of those who labour to undermine the Church's faith, and to subvert her spiritual discipline. It is the Popular supremacy that denies to the Church her liberty and lawful right to increase her Episcopate, by the free-will offerings of her members, so as to render its numbers commensurate with her spiritual needs. It is the Popular supremacy that persists in imposing upon the Church Bishops of its own selection, and turning the free election of her chief pastors, guaranteed to her by the Great Charter of our liberties, into a profane mockery. It is the Popular supremacy that impedes and obstructs the free action of the Church in her synodal assemblies, prevents her from adapting her internal organization to the exigencies of the times, and compels her—to the utmost extent of its power—to remain stationary and stagnant in the midst of a stirring and ever-advancing world. Of all this crying injustice towards the Church the Royal supremacy, in whose name it is perpetrated, is made to bear the blame, while in reality the responsibility of it rests with the Popular supremacy, the most powerful, as well as the most violent and intolerant, of all the rivals and usurpers that have, one after another, risen up against the Supremacy of Christ.

VII.—CONCLUSION.

UPON a survey of the facts brought into view in the course of the preceding inquiry it is not difficult to answer the question so anxiously asked by many, What is to be done to extricate the Church from the trammels of secular tyranny over her? It is not, assuredly, by falling away and taking refuge under the wings of the Papal supremacy that we shall amend our position. That were, indeed, going down to Egypt for help. Neither is it to be effected by clamour and agitation, by spasmodic endeavours to gain the favour and support of the multitude by means of flattering speeches, of attractive novelties and sensational displays; which is but another way of doing homage to the Popular supremacy, and setting up within the Church herself the vicious principle of "private judgment," from which that supremacy has sprung. Dispensing with the use of such carnal weapons, the Church must fall back—in a spirit of prayer and supplication—upon the Supremacy of Christ which no power of this world ever can abrogate, and upon the spiritual power inherent in the Episcopate as the representation of that supremacy. Whatever influence her members can, by legal and constitutional means, bring to bear upon the Popular supremacy, should be directed upon the emancipation of the Episcopate, the restoration of its free election, its unimpeded self-propagation and self-multiplication, its unfettered action within the limits of its own spiritual sphere. That such a restoration is possible—nay, that it may be brought about through a combination of the most untoward occurrences and the most adverse circumstances—is the great, the invaluable lesson which the Church of the present day has been taught by the events that have recently transpired, and are still in progress, in the Church of South Africa. These events evidently constitute the commencement of a far-reaching conflict between the Popular supremacy, putting forth its feeble arm of human strength in support of the unbelief that seeks to sap the very foundations of revealed religion, and the divine power of the Supremacy of Christ, rising up for the defence of the faith once delivered to the saints. How in its further stages that conflict may shape itself, how it may

affect the mother Church of England in her ancient home, no human sagacity can forecast. Still less can human wisdom devise before hand any definite course of action, or calculate its results. The Lord of hosts will set the battle in array; for it is His battle. To the Church it belongs to lift up her voice boldly in faithful testimony to the truth committed to her keeping, and in the midst of oppression and wrong to proclaim aloud her unswerving allegiance to the paramount Supremacy of her Divine Head.

It seems far from improbable that we are on the eve of the final conflict between the Church of Christ and the powers of darkness—of that conflict which Christ Himself will terminate by His glorious appearing to take unto Him His great power, to vindicate His supremacy in the flaming fire of eternal vengeance upon the unbelieving and disobedient, and to present His Church purified and sanctified, in faultless perfection and holy beauty, before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.¹ There are in the signs of the times many indications of the near approach of that day, warning the Churches to hold themselves in readiness for the coming of the Bridegroom. May our own branch of His Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church then be found among the wise Virgins, with an abundant supply of the oil of grace in her lamp, ready to respond to the Bridegroom's voice, "Behold, I come quickly," by joining in the cry of the Spirit and the Bride, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Amen.

¹ Rev. xi. 11—18; 2 Thess. i. 7—10; Rom. ii. 5—9; Eph. v. 25—27; Jude. 24; Rev. xxi., xxii.

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